A

SKETCH

OF THE

REIGN

OF

GEORGE THE THIRD,

FROM

1780,

TO THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR

1790.

DUBLIN:

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M.DCC.XCI.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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SKETCH, &c. &c.

TO thoſe who open the volume of hiſtory with a view to improve their underſtanding; who are competent to carry their reſearches beyond the external appearance of events, and to ſpeculate on the concealed cauſes which produce the elevation, or accelerate the decline of empires, there is not, perhaps, in the annals of time a period more pregnant with political matter, than the one which has elapſed between the year 1780 and the preſent time. In that ſhort

interval, we have ſeen the Britiſh Empire, which had embraced both hemiſpheres, and to which India and America were only provinces; which had ſucceſsfully oppoſed, under the auſpices of the late Earl of Chatham, the combined force of the Houſe of Bourbon, and, after giving laws to Europe, had diſpenſed peace to mankind: we have ſeen this empire ſhaken to its baſis, convulſed at home, and aſſailed on every ſide; vainly invoking the aid of that perfidious Princeſs, whoſe fleets we had conducted into ſeas unknown to her barbarous ſubjects, and whoſe victorious banner we had taught to fly on the ſhore of Greece and of Aſia Minor. It was from her ungrateful hand that England, already bending beneath the complicated calamities of domeſtic diviſion and of foreign war, was deſtined to receive the final blow, which unnerved our arm, and compelled us, reluctantly, to aſſemble our diſtant legions for the protection of the capital, and the preſervation of our exiſtence. It is unneceſſary to ſay, that I allude to the "Armed Neutrality;" a meaſure which originated from the cabinet of Catherine the Second, although it was followed by all the Baltic Powers; and the retribution due to which, however long delayed, is now probably near its accom-

accompliſhment. But we have not only ſeen the Britiſh monarchy, in common with other ſtates and kingdoms, oppreſſed by enemies, and ſinking under the weight of adverſe fortune, or puſillanimous and feeble counſels: we have ſeen this expiring and diminiſhed empire (unlike to every other, and in this diſſimilarity laying the ſtrongeſt claim to the admiration of mankind), within the tranſitory period of only ten years, riſe from a ſtate of humiliation and depreſſion, re-adjuſt her ſcattered inſignia, reſume her ancient luſtre, and wing a ſublimer flight than ſhe had ever held acroſs the political expanſe. It is in vain that the moſt laborious reſearch would endeavour to parallel this extraordinary renovation in the hiſtory of modern Europe. It is only in the Athenian or Roman Annals; it is only at the fatal periods of Marathon, and of Cannæ, that we ſee any example of a republic ſuddenly and rapidly emerging from the loweſt point of ruin and calamity, into greater power and grandeur than ſhe had previouſly enjoyed.

The Auſtrian Eagle, which, under Charles the Fifth and Ferdinand the Second, had ſoared ſo high, and which had even nearly extinguiſhed all the Germanic liberties; ſtripped of its

plumage by Guſtavus Adolphus, and chained to the earth by the manacles which were impoſed on it at the Treaty of Weſtphalia, long ſlumbered in peaceful bondage, 'till Marlborough releaſed the Imperial captive, and once again reſtored it to freedom, though not to its former greatneſs.

Spain, which under Philip the Second had menaced Europe, and ſeemed almoſt in poſſeſſion of her inordinate projects of ambition; which fitted out her invincible Armada for the ſubjection of England, while ſhe prepared to place an infanta on the throne of France: Exhauſted by her own perpetual efforts, and having drained the treaſures of the new world, in vainly attempting to reduce a revolted province, ſunk at once into impotent inſignificance; and now, after the lapſe of two hundred years, appears to be only ſlowly emerging from poverty and weakneſs.

Sweden, which like a torrent overran Poland, Saxony, and Denmark, at the commencement of the preſent century; and which, conducted by the frantic valour of Charles the Twelfth, appeared ready to plant her triumphant ſtandards on the walls of Moſcow, was hurled in a ſingle day from the zenith of power and glory. All

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her laurels withered at Pultowa; and ſince that memorable æra, her melancholy and ſteril annals contain nothing which can awaken curioſity, or intereſt mankind, though more than ſeventy years have elapſed ſince Charles expiated his wild and deſtructive projects of ambition under the walls of Frederickſhall. At the moment when I am writing, a Prince, emulous of the fame of Guſtavus Adolphus, and adorned with qualities which, in a more fortunate period, might have reſtored the drooping genius of Sweden, and re-inſtated her in thoſe provinces which ſhe has loſt, is endeavouring to ſupply the inherent deficiencies ariſing from the impoveriſhed and depopulated ſtate of his dominions, by perſonal fortitude and ability. He has even made an effort not inglorious, to check the Ruſſian progreſs, and to aſſert the ancient pre-eminence of his ſceptre in the Baltic. Theſe, however, are feeble attempts, and ſerve rather to remind us of what Sweden once was, than to awaken any well-grounded expectation that ſhe can again reſume her former ſituation in Europe.

Even France, the favoured country of nature; bleſſed with a happy diverſity of climates; enriched with the choiceſt and moſt

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delicate productions of a luxuriant ſoil; embracing the Atlantic and the Mediterranean ſeas; formed for empire, for dominion, and for ſuperiority among the European kingdoms; uniting in herſelf every natural advantage which induſtry can beſtow, or commerce can procure; inured to the habits of obedience and loyalty, as well as trained to conqueſt and to war: France herſelf, after the ſevere chaſtiſement which Louis the Fourteenth, towards the concluſion of his reign, received from Eugene and Marlborough, remained almoſt ſupine and torpid during thirty years which ſucceeded the Treaty of Utrecht; content to cultivate the peaceful olive, and oppreſſed under the load of public debt, which the inſatiable and ruinous ambition of her ſovereign had incurred. It was not 'till Marechal Saxe awoke her dormant genius, and revived in his perſon the ſublime talents which have equalled him with Condé and Turenne, that France, in any meaſure, reſumed her aſcendant, or ſeemed again to occupy her natural pre-eminence among the ſtates of Europe.

It cannot be more curious to enquire, than it muſt be inſtructive to aſcertain, whence has ariſen this characteriſtic, and peculiar princi-

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pel of reſuſcitation, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, which, in a ſhort ſpace of time, has enabled her, unlike the other ſurrounding monarchies, to profit of her very misfortunes, and to engraft ſplendor and power upon her loſſes and defeats.

Where are we to ſearch for this vivifying ſource of renovation? Is it in her ſpirit of commercial enterprize; in her undiminiſhed induſtry; in her numerous and ingenious manufactures, which have penetrated into almoſt every province of the civilized world? Doubtleſs, theſe cauſes have contributed much to extricate and to reſtore the nation; but, efficacious and ſalutary as their tendency and operation are, they cannot be conſidered as adequate to ſo great a work.

It was requiſite that Providence ſhould extend its tutelary care, to prolong the life and reign of a Prince, inexpreſſibly dear and neceſſary to his people; whoſe experience, matured by years and chaſtened by adverſity, might, and could alone be equal to the arduous taſk of ſelecting from among his ſubjects, thoſe who from capacity and virtue were competent to heal the wounds, and reſtore the energy of the commonwealth. It was requiſite that a miniſter

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ſhould ariſe, who, to incorruptible integrity, and unblemiſhed manners, ſhould unite ſtrength of mind, ſevere œconomy, vigilance which never ſleeps, eloquence to captivate, and vigour to ſubdue. Rare, and almoſt unexampled combination of endowments, conferred by Heaven on thoſe, and on thoſe only, whom, in her wiſe diſpenſations, ſhe deſtines to ſuſtain, and reſtore a ſinking monarchy! Yet ſuch a miniſter, may it be aſſerted without flattery, has this age and country ſeen. Such an adminiſtration have we already enjoyed during near ſeven years; and to it may be juſtly aſcribed thoſe auſpicious and happy events, which the preſent age regards with mingled wonder and admiration, and which will be long commemorated by a grateful poſterity.

To trace the gradual progreſſion from the darkneſs of 1780, to the bright ſunſhine of the preſent moment: to pourtray ſome of the leading characters and events, which have ſucceſſively marked and diſtinguiſhed the intermediate time: to deſcribe that ſtormy and tempeſtuous period, which, during two years, ſhook the cabinet, the palace, and the throne, till in 1784, the preſent miniſter, after a long and painful ſtruggle, advanced into open day, and commenced his bril-

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liant career: to mark the principal and moſt diſcriminating features of his domeſtic government, and foreign policy: to take a general and rapid ſurvey of the cauſes which have involved the monarchy of France in anarchy, and which ſeem to threaten that beautiful portion of Europe with all the horrors of civil war, of bloodſhed, and of bankruptcy: finally, to deduce this intereſting ſeries of events from the period at which I have commenced, to the time when I ſhall lay before the public the picture which I am now deſigning: theſe are the objects of the preſent attempt. I am ſenſible of all its difficulty and delicacy. I know how dangerous it is to hold up even truths to the eye of prejudice, or of party; and how reluctantly we allow the veil to be withdrawn from before the political ſanctuary, when we are intereſted in its concealment or its defence. I feel how invidious is the taſk of appreciating the motions and actions of our cotemporaries, our friends, and our fellow citizens. I am not inſenſible, above all, of my own incapacity to treat of matters yet recent, and obſcured by the paſſions and intereſts of the great actors themſelves. But, great as theſe impediments are, they cannot induce me to relinquiſh my deſign. What narrative can be ſo inſtructive,

tive, or ſo intereſting *to* the preſent age, as the hiſtory *of* the preſent age? "Veteris populi Ro-"mani, proſpera, vel adverſa, claris ſcriptoribus "memorata ſunt:" Of the laſt ten years, no ſketch has yet been offered to the public. It will be my province, "ſine ira et ſtudio, quorum "cauſas procul habeo;" with as much impartiality as the ſubject itſelf, and the infirmities of our nature will admit, to delineate the events which have paſſed in ſucceſſion before us, ſince the diſaſtrous period where the preſent memoirs commence.

The Britiſh empire, which only a few years preceding that æra had appeared to be ſo elevated and durable, then exhibited a melancholy and inſtructive leſſon of the mutability of human greatneſs. Civil war, which had commenced its deſtruction, was aided by a combination of the firſt European powers to compleat its fall. Her fleets and armies, accuſtomed to conqueſt, retreated before the navies of France and Spain. Her ſhores, ſo long unuſed to hoſtile invaſion, were threatened and inſulted. Her finances groaning beneath new and annual loans, conducted upon injudicious or ruinous principles, ſeemed to approach that point, beyond which public credit cannot exiſt

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or ſurvive. Diſcord raiſed her flaming brand in the capital, the ſenate, and the cabinet. London, ſcarcely eſcaped from conflagration and pillage, looked forward to a general ſuſpenſion of commerce, and to national inſolvency, as imminent and almoſt inevitable. Clamour and diſcontent filled the kingdom, and characteriſed the aſſemblies of the people in the different counties. Ireland, diſdaining all further appeal except to the ſword, and treading in the traces of America, armed her ſubjects, not ſo much for defence and protection, as for the purpoſes of emancipation from the yoke of England. In the Britiſh Channel, once ſacred from foreign intruſion, the iſlands of Jerſey were repeatedly attacked. Spain, which had already re-united Minorca to her crown, held Gibraltar beſieged, and meditated the conqueſt of the Floridas. Every month brought accounts of the diminution of the Weſt India Iſlands, which ſucceſſively fell into the hands of France; while Jamaica, left almoſt to her own internal capacities of defence, expected with trembling ſolicitude the long meditated invaſion by the united fleets of the Houſe of Bourbon.

In India, Hyder Ally, the ſcourge of the Britiſh nation, aided by the arms of France, was on the

the point of exterminating and expelling us from our moſt ancient poſſeſſions. Madras was menaced by famine, as well as by war; while Bengal itſelf ſcarcely ſuſtained the preſſure of the Mahrattas; and the vaſt fabric which Clive had cemented with a profuſion of European and Aſiatic blood, was ready to crumble with as much rapidity as it had been originally conſtructed.

" In America, the names of Clinton and Cornwallis had ſucceeded to thoſe of Howe. New armies had occupied the poſts of their victorious, but departed predeceſſors. The war which had long blazed in the midland provinces, was then principally transferred to thoſe of Carolina and Virginia. Uſeleſs trophies and barren laurels appeared to be the only advantages, which we were deſtined to derive or acquire. Impenetrable woods and impaſſible moraſſes, in the centre of which freedom had diſplayed her banner, perpetually baffled all the exertions of valour, military ſkill, and perſeverance. England began to awake from her dream of ſubjugating the Thirteen Colonies, and already meditated the dereliction of that ruinous and expenſive undertaking; while her pride, her honour, and her indignation ſtill propelled her forward,

forward, and amuſed her with hopes of ſucceſs, which conſtantly vaniſhed at a nearer view. Like the Roman empire under Gallienus, that of Britain ſeemed to approach the period of all its glories, and to be menaced with impending and total ſubverſion.

From this gloomy and dejecting picture of foreign affairs, it may be judicious to paſs to a more animated, if not a more exhilarating ſcene; that which was exhibited at home in the two houſes of Parliament. The principal figure which here preſented itſelf, was the firſt miniſter, Lord North, ſtruggling againſt a hoſt of enemies, and ſlowly retreating before them, while they preſſed forward with loud and repeated clamours. A thouſand javelins hung upon his political buckler, the points of which were continually broken and turned aſide by his urbanity, his ready and pleaſant wit, or his able and ingenious reaſonings, when ſufficiently ſtung by the reproaches which were heaped on him, to awaken and to rouſe his torpid parts. Inur'd to the habits of parliamentary debate, maſter of all the ſcience of miniſterial evaſion or defence: though deſtitute of energy and coercion of character, yet eloquent, mild, perſuaſive, and bleſſed with an almoſt inſuperable

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tranquillity of temper, he patiently ſaw the ſtorm exhauſt itſelf; and looked round, ſerene and placid, to that powerful phalanx, which, long accuſtomed to obey, ſtill cloſely adhered to him under every circumſtance of public diſtreſs, and never abandoned him in the hour of neceſſity. Even the lethargic and ſoporific qualities of his body, as they frequently prevented him from either hearing or feeling the invectives of oppoſition, in ſome meaſure diſarmed and blunted their edge; while ſlumbers, which ſo often fly the couch of princes, not unuſually viſited Lord North amidſt all the din and tumult of the Treaſury Bench. Near him ſat the American Secretary, Lord George Germaine; whoſe more irritable nerves, and more communicative or unguarded character, afforded materials and ſcope for continual attack. Gifted with extraordinary natural endowments, though little cultivated by polite letters, or adorned by ſcience; active, perſevering, deciſive, and capable of conducting the greateſt affairs of ſtate, he was yet purſued by the ſame fatality which had blaſted his early proſpects of greatneſs. Unſucceſsful in age upon the plains of America, as he had been unfortunate in youth upon thoſe of Germany, he vainly invoked an exhauſted nation,

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and a diſcontented Parliament, to continue a war, which, however juſt and neceſſary in its origin, had become odious and ungrateful, from a long ſeries of ill ſucceſs. Loyal to his Sovereign, pertinacious in his favourite meaſure of ſubjecting America, and conceiving his own political ſituation inſeparably connected with the final ſucceſs of that attempt, he adhered inflexibly to it, and regarded its proſecution as a ſacred principle, from which no obſtacles could induce him to recede.

Mr. Ellis, who for near half a century, ſince the times of Walpole and Pelham, had occupied a place under Government, continued to retain his ancient corner on the Treaſury Bench; while Mr. Dundas, whoſe pliant and verſatile talents have adapted themſelves to almoſt every Adminiſtration, and whoſe abilities are calculated to ſtrengthen and ſupport any, was ſeated nearer to the centre of the action, and boldly preſented himſelf at the poſt of danger, whenever the enemy attempted to ſtorm the outworks. His friend and companion Mr. Rigby, ſtill enjoyed the ample revenue of the Pay Office, without a partner; and in the exceſſes of a voluptuous table, of wine and conviviality,

viality, drowned the recollection of tireſome debates, and more diſgraceful defeats.

The two great luminaries of legal knowledge, Thurlow and Wedderburne, who had long occupied and adorned their ſeats on the ſame ſide of the houſe, had been ſucceſſively raiſed to the honours of the peerage; and their empty places were filled by others far inferior in energy, dignity and capacity. Such was the aſpect of miniſtry at the period to which I allude. On the other ſide of the houſe, Mr. Fox led on the bands of oppoſition in cloſe and well conducted files, while Mr. Burke charged at the head of his irregular ſquadrons, and carried terror into the ranks of adminiſtration. Dunning, in defiance of nature, deſtitute almoſt of organs of articulation, monotonous and diſguſting in his tones, ungraceful in his figure, poſſeſſing no external advantages, and unadorned by any factitious circumſtances of birth and alliance; yet, under all theſe impediments, arreſted the judgment, charmed the ear, and captivated the imagination, by the ſtream of his eloquence: though it ſometimes flowed through the channels of law, it was always bright and, clear, and lucid. Keppel, Conway, Howe, and Barrè occupied their reſ-

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pective ſtations in this formidable and augmenting body, and aided the general attack upon the feeble and diſmayed adherents of the miniſter.

Suſtained by the purity and integrity of his intentions; repoſing on the eſteem and affections of his people; and bent on the proſecution of a war, which, however unfortunate in its conduct, was founded in the juſt rights of his throne, no ſymptom of change or alarm was to be traced in the ſovereign. At no period of his reign were his fortitude and magnanimity put to ſo ſevere a teſt, and at none were they more unſhaken. Equanimity, ſerenity, and dignity appeared in his features, and pervaded his manners, even in moments of the moſt acute perſonal ſuffering. That piety, and that reſignation to the diſpenſations of Providence, which has always formed ſo diſtinguiſhing a part of his character, eminently gilded the gloom of this melancholy portion of his reign, preceded and followed by ſcenes of proſperity and glory. Such was the ſublime and affecting ſpectacle which George the Third exhibited to mankind, amidſt the convulſions of every kind which menaced his domeſtic tranquillity,

diminiſhed his empire, and attacked him with augmenting violence.

To the limited and erring eye of man, incapable of pervading futurity, and of removing the darkneſs which ſurrounds it, Louis the Sixteenth then preſented a very different and a much more enviable figure. Fortunate in having ſucceeded to a prince, who was ſunk in diſſolute pleaſures, and loſt to all public exertion before his reign expired, he aſcended the throne of Henry the Fourth, under every flattering circumſtance of youth and proſperity. His want of any eminent talents ſeemed to be amply compenſated by œconomy, application, decorum of manners, and, above all, by a ſelection of wiſe and able miniſters. A ſucceſsful war, which eclipſed and obliterated the diſgraces and defeats, ſuſtained by France in her laſt rupture with England, endeared him to a loyal and affectionate nation; characteriſed for ages by its predilection and attachment to its monarchs. A Queen, diſtinguiſhed by endowments of mind, of manners, and of perſon, not leſs than by her high rank and imperial deſcent, had formed the bond of connexion between the Houſes of Bourbon and Auſtria, while ſhe rendered Verſailles the reſidence of

pleaſure

pleaſure, gaiety, and magnificence. France appeared to re-aſcend in the ſcale of Europe, in the ſame proportion as Great Britain declined; and flattery, if not reaſon, already predicted the revival of the proud age of Lewis the Fourteenth. But, to confound the ſpeculations of policy, and to evince the haſty tranſitions of human greatneſs, it was preciſely at this very juncture that the ſeeds were ſown, which we have ſince ſeen matured; which have already overturned the very elements of order and government, ſtained the palace of Verſailles with blood, and menace the extinction of property, perſonal ſecurity, and every thing dear to mankind. The troops who were ſent as auxiliaries to the rebellious provinces of Great Britain beyond the Atlantic, ſpeedily imbibed that ſpirit of freedom, which they were commanded to defend; and did not relinquiſh theſe ſentiments ſo incompatible with abſolute monarchy, when they returned to their native country. On the other hand, the anticipation of the public revenue, which was neceſſarily produced by a war, however glorious and ſucceſsful, added to the immoderate expences of a diſſipated and luxurious court, ſoon reduced the King to adopt a meaſure, which though

diſintereſted and even patriotic, opened the way to ſhake his throne. Louis the Sixteenth was perſuaded to break the royal houſehold, to diſmiſs about four hundred officers holding poſts immediately about his perſon, and to content himſelf with a leſs expenſive and ſplendid eſtabliſhment. Perhaps no advice more replete with calamity, could have been conceived or followed. The pomp and external paraphernalia of majeſty being once withdrawn; and the numbers of nobility attached to the ſovereign by intereſt, vanity, or affection, being once diſbanded, the throne was left naked, unprotected, and expoſed to inſult. Experience has evinced its deſtructive tendency; and has ſhewn that only a limited monarch, who reigns in the affections of his ſubjects, and whoſe intereſts are intimately blended with thoſe of his people, can remain an object of reſpect and homage, diveſted of the ſplendor and protection of a royal court, and numerous houſehold.

The Empreſs Queen, Maria Thereſa, cloſed at this period a reign of forty years, marked by the moſt ſtriking viciſſitudes of proſperous and of adverſe fortune. During the exiſtence of the powerful combination which ſhook her

throne

throne in the commencement of her life, ſhe exhibited the moſt undaunted magnanimity, the greateſt reſources of mind, and a courage ſuperior to her ſex. Driven from Vienna in 1741, while Bohemia and Auſtria were over-run by the French aud Bavarians, ſhe found protection and ſuccours in the loyalty of her Hungarian ſubjects, who at the ſight of her beauty, youth, and misfortunes, forgot their hereditary enmity and jealouſy of the Imperial houſe from which ſhe ſprung. The afternoon and evening of her reign, though frequently diſturbed by foreign wars, were paſſed by her in the diſcharge of every duty due from a ſovereign to her people. Mild, clement, humane, munificent, and ever extending the proofs of her parental tenderneſs to her wide extended dominions, ſhe was idolized by the Hungarians, beloved by the Flemings; and dear to every order of citizens. That piety and fortitude which had characterized her life, accompanied and brightened her dying moments. Her crowns deſcended to her ſon Joſeph; a Prince who had given premature expectations of genius and capacity, and whoſe emulation of the King of Pruſſia promiſed to render him worthy of ſo great an antagoniſt. But Europe was ſoon undeceived in this favour-

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able anticipation of the talents of Joſeph the Second. Agitated with perpetual and varying ſchemes of conqueſt: reſtleſs, and incapable of repoſe: planning innovations in religion, in manners, and in civil life, which were no ſooner executed than revoked: oppreſſive and deſpotic, without the art either of concealing theſe qualities, or of rendering their effects palatable to his ſubjects: menacing at the ſame moment the juſt franchiſes of the Netherlands, and the antient liberties of Hungary; dreaded in the empire, and deteſted in his own capital: anxious to enlarge the limits of his dominions, even at the expence of faith and juſtice: rapacious of eccleſiaſtical property, and profuſe only of the blood of his people; Joſeph ſoon alienated the affections of every rank, and cloſed a tempeſtuous reign, unregretted, and unlamented; leaving the Houſe of Auſtria in embarraſſments, produced by his violence and ambition, ſcarcely inferior to thoſe which had ſo nearly overturned and extinguiſhed it, at the death of his grandfather Charles the Sixth.

Two illuſtrious and extraordinary Princes then filled the thrones of Muſcovy and of Pruſſia. A woman was ſtill deſtined to ſway the ſceptre of the Czars, and to govern the immenſe regions

extending

extending from the Frozen to the Caſpian Sea. Unequalled in magnificence, and unconquerable in war, Catherine the Second had enlarged the limits of her vaſt dominions, covered the Black Sea with Ruſſian fleets, and threatened the entire ſubverſion of the Ottoman power. Protectreſs of the ſciences and liberal arts, ſhe cultivated the friendſhip of d'Alembert, courted the correſpondence and the praiſes of Voltaire, and, like Louis XIV, extended her munificence to men of letters throughout every kingdom of Europe. Intoxicated with ſucceſs, and elevated to the ſummit of human grandeur and felicity, ſhe forgot the friendly hand which had aided her arms, and taught them the way to victory; while dreaded and admired in every quarter of the globe, ſhe ſeemed to have chained the inconſtancy of fortune, and to defy the changes and clouds which ſo frequently darken the concluſion of a female reign.

Frederic, covered with laurels, and retired from Berlin to the ſolitary magnificence of Potzdam; in the boſom of literary repoſe, and ſinking under the preſſure of augmenting infirmities, advanced towards the termination of his memorable life and reign. Alienated from, or indifferent to the misfortunes of England, he

regarded

regarded with a philoſophic and averted eye her preſent unequal conteſt againſt ſo many powers; and extended no relief, nor made any exertion in favour of his antient ally.

Portugal alone, among ſo many neutral, or hoſtile ſtates, ventured, at this diſtreſsful moment, to give ſome affirmative marks of friendſhip to the crown of Great Britain.

While Europe exhibited this aſpect, ſo little calculated to awaken hope, freſh loſſes and defeats awaited the arms of England beyond the Atlantic. The capture of the Iſland of St. Euſtatius, which on its firſt promulgation, had diffuſed a general joy throughout the nation, produced in the event only obloquy to the captors, and a ſuſpenſion the moſt untimely and injurious in our naval and military exertions; while the troops, which ſhould have acted with vigour againſt the enemy, were ſunk in inactivity, or occupied in plunder.

As the year advanced, new iſlands were loſt, and new diſgraces incurred; 'till the climax of national calamity attained its ultimate point, by the ſurrender of an army of ſeven thouſand men, who laid down their arms before Waſhington and Rochambeau, on the ſhore of the Cheſapeake. After ſix years of mutual

ſlaughter

ſlaughter and alternate ſucceſs, the genius of America triumphed, and this laſt unexampled victory for ever confirmed her independence. The intelligence, when it was received in England, ſhook the already tottering Adminiſtration, and precipitated its fall. Diſmay and terror pervaded the cabinet, and agitated the counſels. The Oppoſition, conſcious of the augmenting diſtreſs and fluctuating irreſolution of the firſt miniſter, called aloud for an explicit avowal of his renunciation of any further efforts to ſubjugate the revolted colonies. The expreſſive ſilence of Lord North to theſe peremptory demands, left no room to doubt either of his ſentiments or his wiſhes; and the Secretary for America, retiring from a ſituation no longer tenable, after a rude attack from Lord Carmarthen, was received into the quiet boſom of the Houſe of Lords. The enemy ruſhed into the breach which this diſunion had occaſioned, and already beheld the prize within their graſp. The Adminiſtration, however, ſtill lingered, though deſtitute of animation or energy; a feeble and ineffectual effort was even made to prolong their exiſtence, by the ſubſtitution of Mr. Ellis in the place of Lord George Germain; but this ſtep ſerved only to accelerate

their

their diſſolution. Oppoſition, eaſier to ſeize the prey, and acquiring force as they advanced, puſhed on towards the citadel; 'till Lord North, on the 20th of March, 1782, exhibited the ſingular and humiliating ſpectacle of a Firſt Miniſter diveſting himſelf of all the inſignia of office, before a crowded Houſe of Commons; and announcing his reſignation to an aſtoniſhed audience, who ſcarcely credited the fact of which they were witneſſes. The novelty and effect of this extraordinary ſurrender of power, were encreaſed by its being equally ſudden and unexpected. Neither his friends nor his enemies were aware of the blow; and even his ſovereign did not ſuſpect, 'till almoſt the very inſtant in which he executed his purpoſe, that any ſuch was meditated or intended. It is nugatory and unneceſſary here to enquire, whether it was principally produced by timidity, fatigue, or diſguſt. Probably, by a combination of all theſe emotions; and unqueſtionably by a very unforeſeen and haſty determination.

In this diſarmed and unprepared ſituation, without either time or ability for framing a new miniſtry, the King could only ſurrender at diſcretion. He did ſo; and the royal garriſon, entered by ſtorm, was plundered by the conquerors.

querors. Three garters were found among the ſpoils, and which ſerved to decorate the principal chieftains. Offices and poſts were diſtributed at their arbitrary pleaſure; and a new Adminiſtration ſoon appeared, compoſed of motley materials, and evincing in its very formation and component parts, the principles of ſpeedy diſſolution. The feeble genius of Lord Rockingham preſided over it, but could inſpire no heat or energy into the heterogeneous maſs. Ill calculated for ſo arduous and delicate a ſtation, he wanted talents to guide, and animate the complicated machine of which he was only the oſtenſible leader. Mr. Fox and the Earl of Shelburne occupied the two Secretary-ſhips of State; while Keppel, raiſed to the peerage for his ſervices on the 27th of July, 1778, ſucceeded to the preſidency of the vacant Board of Admiralty.

It is not my intention minutely to delineate or depicture the meaſures of this tranſitory Adminiſtration, juſt ſhewn to the Britiſh, as Marcellus was to the Roman people; and ſnatched away by an extinction as haſty, but not as much lamented. I have ever regarded the ſhort period of its duration, as the laſt and loweſt point of national and royal depreſſion. Though illuminated

illuminated by a victory, which has ſhed an unexampled luſtre over the annals of England, no ray of it reflected upon the Miniſtry: they had vilified and perſecuted the great naval commander who obtained it, previous to his departure for his ſtation: they recalled him in the very moment of his conqueſts. The annals of that period, circumſcribed within three months, are marked by the humiliating and fruitleſs attempts of the Government to obtain peace from Holland; though illuſory promiſes and aſſurances of ſucceſs had been held out to parliament, and to the country, by Mr. Fox, before his entry upon office. The peerage, in the almoſt only inſtance where it was conferred, was extorted from the ſovereign, without even the decencies of reſpect, or of requeſt; and the extraordinary ſpectacle of a newly-created Peer kiſſing the King's hand in the Queen's drawing room, in violation of all form or uſage, was reſerved for the Rockingham Adminiſtration to exhibit, in the perſon of Sir Fletcher Norton.

A bill, which without materially conducing to national œconomy, or public benefit, diminiſhed on one hand the dignity which uſed to wait upon the perſon of the ſovereign; and on the

the other, diſarmed every ſucceeding miniſter, by leaving him ſcarcely any objects with which to ſtimulate activity, or reward merit and adherence. A bill, which by compelling every Adminiſtration, from want of offices, to multiply the peerage, as the only thing left in their power to beſtow; and which, if not redreſſed and repealed, may eventually deſtroy the balance of the conſtitution. A bill, well known and as well characteriſed by the name of its eloquent, but theoretical and viſionary author, was introduced, and rapidly carried through the unreſiſting Houſes of Parliament; while the King was compelled to lend his name and aid to the completion of a law, which diſbanded his houſhold, and diſarmed his authority.

This unwiſe and impolitic attack upon the majeſty of the throne, was properly accompanied and ſucceeded by ſimilar invaſions of the hereditary franchiſes of the people. Under the ſpecious allegation of extinguiſhing the corrupt influence of the Crown, a great and induſtrious body of men, the officers of the cuſtoms, were deprived of their juſt and unalienable right to vote in elections for their repreſentatives in Parliament; and the natural reward of merit or ſervices was converted by the Legiſlature, into

into an inſtrument of puniſhment and privation.

But, happily for the monarch and for the nation, a Miniſtry, in which hypocritical profeſſion was ſubſtituted for action; whoſe conqueſts were limited to St. James's, and whoſe trophies were only obtained over clerks of the Green Cloth and houſekeepers, now drew near its extinction. The natural deceaſe of the Marquis of Rockingham, which took place upon the 1ſt of July, 1782, can ſcarcely be ſaid to have preceded, or anticipated his political diſmiſſion. He expired in the vicinity of London, regretted only by his immediate friends and adherents; eſteemed as a virtuous and a well intentioned, though an inadequate Miniſter. His elevation to the firſt poſt in the Adminiſtration was injurious to his character as a man of talents; and he was twice deſtined in the preſent reign, to ſee the political fabrick which he had reared, moulder within a few months, and ſink under its own preſſure. Like Galba, "Major privato viſus, dum privatus fuit; et "omnium conſenſu, capax imperii, niſi impe-"raſſet."

Releaſed by this interpoſition of fortune, from a bondage equally ſevere and humiliating, the

Sovereign

Sovereign made a ſelection from among his ſervants, more conſonant to his own perſonal inclinations, as well as more calculated to advance the public ſervice. The Earl of Shelburne aſſumed the vacant Treaſurer's ſtaff, which had dropped from the hand of the deceaſed Marquis; while the honeſt and virtuous incapacity of the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, was ſupplied by equal probity and integrity, but accompanied with thoſe ſublime and early talents, which Mr. Pitt alone has diſplayed and ſuſtained in the preſent age. Having declined the proffered advances of the late Miniſtry, and having refuſed to form any inferior part of, or accept any ſecondary ſituation under that ſyſtem, he now firſt appeared in the front ranks of government; and evinced to an aſtoniſhed nation, that in a poſt ſo arduous as that of the ſuperintendance of the complicated finances of an exhauſted and impoveriſhed country, he could unite the energy and vigour of youth, with the maturity and experience of more advanced life.

Some ſubordinate alterations in other departments of ſtate completed the new Adminiſtration; which, at its commencement, was favoured by the advanced period of the year and

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ſeſſion, and the prorogation of Parliament which naturally followed. The adherents of Lord Rockingham filled the Lower Houſe with loud clamours and pointed inſinuations, againſt the ſuppoſed motives and authors of a change ſo inimical, as they aſſerted, to the beſt intereſts of the monarchy. Mr. Fox in a manly and magnanimous, Mr. Burke, in a querulous and reluctant manner, reſpectively reſigned their ſituations. The impaſſioned exclamations of the latter were only interrupted and extinguiſhed by the arrival of the Black Rod, and the ſummons to attend the Chancellor at the bar of the Houſe of Lords. The ſeſſion cloſed; and oblivion already drew her veil acroſs the departed Adminiſtration, while new convulſions, and new ſcenes of political confuſion were ſilently, but rapidly, generating in the womb of time.

Peace, which for ſo many years had fled, now prepared to return. Inactivity, and premature ſuſpenſion of hoſtility beyond the Atlantic, gradually opened the paſſage to univerſal tranquillity in Europe. America, already declared independent by the Legiſlature, no longer occupied the arms or efforts of Great Britain. Holland, divided by the Orange

and

and the Republican factions, feebly ſuſtained her portion of the common attack. France, arreſted in the midſt of all her conqueſts by the arm of Rodney, ſaw her boaſted navy ſcattered over the Weſtern world; happy to eſcape the purſuit of a victorious fleet, and to ſink undiſturbed, in the havens of Martinico, or of Boſton. It only remained to humble the arrogance of Spain; who, inſolent with unaccuſtomed ſucceſs, and elated with the trophies acquired at Minorca, and in Florida, had aſſembled her forces of every kind round the rock of Gibraltar, and already anticipated the reunion of that proud fortreſs to her dominions. To indulge at once the gratification of national vanity, as well as the acquiſition of glory, a Prince of the Blood Royal of France was invited to quit the effeminate pleaſures of Verſailles, and to become a ſpectator of its reduction from the Spaniſh camp. Preparations only inferior to thoſe of Philip the Second againſt Elizabeth, were made to accelerate and ſecure ſo favourite an object of the court of Madrid; while all Europe might be ſaid, in common with the Count d'Artois, to have fixed their eyes upon this animating ſpectacle. I need not relate the event; inſcribed

in characters which muſt laſt as long as military fame and valour are revered among men. The formidable armaments of Charles the Third periſhed under the ſuperior fire of the garriſon; and the miſerable victims who eſcaped from the conflagration, were indebted for their lives to the exertions of that very enemy, for whoſe deſtruction they had been aſſembled.

Under this ſingular blaze of glory and ſucceſs was terminated a war, which had been marked during its progreſs with every circumſtance adverſe to England, and which, at many periods, had menaced its very exiſtence. Negociations, prolonged throughout the autumn, produced a general pacification at the beginning of 1783; the terms of which, however widely different they were from thoſe which Great Britain dictated at the treaties of Utrecht and of Fontainbleau, ſeemed neither ignominious nor diſadvantageous, in the enfeebled ſtate of the finances and reſources of the country. France reſtored almoſt all her acquiſitions, while Spain retained her conqueſts; and Holland, which had tardily and reluctantly been forced from her pacific ſyſtem, was abandoned by her allies, and left to expiate

piate by conceſſions, the departure from her ancient policy and connexions.

But the waves of party, which had been ſo long and ſo violently agitated, could not immediately ſubſide with the extinction of hoſtilities. The two powerful factions, who had ſucceſſively poſſeſſed, and been deprived of the government, however adverſe they were to each other, yet united in their common oppoſition to the new intruders. The character of the Firſt Lord of the Treaſury, though diſtinguiſhed by many impoſing qualities of mind, by ingratiating and popular manners, and by an enlarged acquaintance with the foreign intereſts of England; yet wanted that ſtamp of probity and principle, without which a great nation never confers eſteem and confidence. Inſincerity and duplicity were aſcribed to him by his enemies. Accuſations and ſuſpenſions were circulated, poſſibly originating only in calumny, which arraigned his purity of conduct as a Miniſter, and inſinuated his acquiſition of perſonal wealth by the abuſe of his high ſituation, during the progreſs of the late negociations, to the ſordid purpoſes of private gain. Doubts of this complexion, however unauthenticated or unjuſt they may be

 ſuppoſed,

ſuppoſed, yet, by operating on the public, equally indiſpoſed them towards the peace, and towards its author.

To theſe obvious and oftenſible cauſes of his diſmiſſion, may be added the extraordinary and almoſt inexplicable indifference which marked his conduct, towards preſerving a ſituation, which it had been the leading and predominant object of his life to acquire. Parliament met, and after long and violent debates, renewed at various times, expreſſed its diſapprobation of the peace recently concluded, though by a very ſmall majority. It is even highly probable that this mark of their diſſatisfaction would not have been attended or followed by any ſuch affirmative proofs of national reſentment, as to have compelled a Miniſter of firmneſs and rectitude to retire from his public ſituation. Whether any conſciouſneſs of a deficiency in either of theſe qualities, or whether motives more concealed and unaſcertainable actuated the Earl of Shelburne; it is certain that he did not heſitate to take the warning which had been given him, and to lay down his office without delay.

But though he had embraced this puſillanimous and precipitate part, the Chancellor

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of the Exchequer, animated by feelings of integrity, loyalty, and duty to his Prince and to his country, generouſly refuſed to abandon them to the reſentments and diſcretionary mandates of two factions, who had agreed to a mutual ſacrifice of principle, and even of decency, in order to gratify their thirſt of power. After a manly and magnanimous, but ineffectual ſtruggle, he was however compelled to yield to ſo unequal a force. The Sovereign, who had vainly endeavoured to compoſe a new Adminiſtration, and who had been beſieged in his own palace during ſix weeks, found the lines of circumvallation too ſtrong to force, and ſurrendered a ſecond time priſoner of war. The two victorious chieftains, who had agreed to bury all paſt cauſes of reſentment in oblivion, entered the breach in triumph, bound their captive, poſted their centinels, and inveſted themſelves in the ſpoils which their conduct had acquired. The larger ſhare however of theſe emoluments fell to Mr. Fox; and the Treaſury was transferred from the mild incapacity of Lord Rockingham, whom death had removed, to the laborious, but limited and ſubſervient talents of the Duke of Portland. Lord North, who did not feel

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with Cæſar, that " the firſt ſituation in a vil-
" lage out-valued the ſecond in an empire,"
was content with the inferior portion of power and profit, allotted him by the liberality of his new aſſociates, and mixed in the cavalcade, which he had ſo long conducted. Too happy to obtain an amneſty for the misfortunes of his Adminiſtration, and ſoothed with the unaccuſtomed panegyrics of thoſe who had ſo lately called out for axes and ſcaffolds; he ſunk without emotion, into the ſubordinate office, and reſigned the painful pre-eminence of ſtate into hands of greater energy or ambition.

A pauſe ſucceeded to this extraordinary and eventful transfer of power; as the monach and the nation were equally incapable of inſtantly exerting any effort for their emancipation. The " Coalition" impoſed their fetters upon both; and little attentive to acquire the affection, were ſatisfied with the ſubmiſſion of their priſoners. Relying on their own united ſtrength to retain the conqueſts they had made, they only began already to project the means of perpetuating and extending the term of their duration. To atchieve this object, it was indiſpenſably neceſſary to reconſtruct the edifice which their injudicious ſpirit of reform had lately overthrown; and

and to ſubſtitute other charges and offices in the place of thoſe, which had been annihilated in the houſehold of the Sovereign. Theſe pleaſing anticipations and reveries formed a grateful occupation during the receſs of Parliament; and the ſucceeding winter was deſtined to ſee the chains, which an unprincipled ambition had fabricated, impoſed with all the ſolemnity of legiſlation upon an unreſiſting people.

There is however a limit preſcribed to violence, which it has ever been found impracticable to paſs; and the "Coalition" was deſtined to be taught by its own experience, that no combination of talents, power, or ability can ſuſtain a Government, where all opinion of principle, or reſpect for character have ceaſed to exiſt, on the part of the nation towards its tyrants. Even the forms of the conſtitution and the ſanctity of law will not prevent a generous and enlightened country, from diſcerning the abuſe of that authority, which while it extinguiſhes prerogative, militates equally againſt freedom. Time alone was requiſite to mature theſe reflections; and the Adminiſtration opened the way to their own deſtruction, by the very means which they had concerted for

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placing their greatneſs beyond the reach of accident.

Mr. Fox introduced his celebrated "Eaſt "India Bill," with all the ſplendor of parts, and diſplay of ability, which has rendered him ſo diſtinguiſhed in the hiſtory of the preſent age. Though India was not in that department of public buſineſs, over which, as Secretary of State, he perſonally preſided, yet the ſuperior energy of his character, and the convenient facility of his new colleague, allowed him to aſſume this arduous and dangerous pre-eminence. Mr. Burke's ample and inexhauſtible ſtock of materials and documents, ſupplied any deficiencies of memory or local information; while the "Inſtitutes of *Timur*," and the wiſeſt regulations of European policy, were new modelled by this generous legiſlator. The oppreſſions and calamities under which India had ſo long ſuffered; the peculations, committed by the ſervants of the Company, as well as the wanton and unprincipled wars in which they had engaged, were highly painted, and ſtrongly reprobated. The remedy to theſe numerous evils was preſented; and all palliatives were deprecated, as unequal to the extermination of a diſeaſe which had pervaded the whole ſyſtem,

which

which demanded a meaſure of more than ordinary vigour in the Legiſlature. The Houſe of Commons yielded to theſe convincing and miniſterial arguments, ſo calculated to operate on their paſſions as well as their judgments. The ineffectual oppoſition which was made to it by Mr. Pitt, and a few perſons who adhered to him, neither retarded nor impeded the rapid progreſs of the bill. It was carried through one Houſe of Parliament by prodigious ſuperiority of numbers; and it was not apprehended that the ſubſervient underſtandings of the other Houſe, generally diſpoſed to ſee all meaſures of all Adminiſtrations with a favourable eye, would reject the preſent, or canvaſs it with unuſual ſeverity. The "Coalition" appeared already to touch the ſhore, and to be near the accompliſhment of their moſt ſanguine projects of greatneſs.

The magnanimity and penetration of the Sovereign, awakened and directed by the timely exhortation of thoſe who collected round the throne in this critical and dangerous conjuncture, ſnatched the country from the impending misfortune. The great incorporated bodies in various parts of the kingdom, ſlowly rouſed to a comprehenſion of the evil, and alarmed at the

violation

violation of the chartered rights of the firſt commercial company in the nation, appeared ready to reclaim and to defend their own threatened immunities, or properties. London led the way in theſe ſymptoms of conſternation, and was followed by the principal cities and provinces. Addreſſes, remonſtrances, and petitions, arrived from every part of Great Britain. Satire and ridicule, ſo powerful in their operation upon the minds of men, united with reaſon and argument to overturn a Miniſtry, who had attempted to conſtruct their own grandeur, equally on the ruin of the Prerogative, and the deſtruction of the Conſtitution. Two caricature drawings, conceived with exquiſite humour, and whoſe effect can perhaps be compared with nothing in our hiſtory, except the ſong of "Lillibullero" under James the Second, were circulated in every company. In one of theſe, the Secretary of State, who had introduced the bill, was depictured carrying, like Atlas, the whole Eaſt-India Houſe upon his ſhoulders; while the affrighted Directors, looking out of the windows, appeared vainly to invoke aſſiſtance againſt the violence. The other repreſented his triumphal entry into Dehli, the capital of his newly conquered dominions

minions. Mr. Fox was habited in the ſplendid Aſiatic dreſs of Shaw Allum; while his obedient colleague in office Lord North, degraded to the inferior nature of the trained and managed elephant, ſupported the victor on his back. Mr. Burke, as a trumpeter, accompanied the proceſſion, proclaiming the virtues and trophies of this ſucceſſor of Tamerlane and Aurengzebe.

The ſtorm of national indignation, though long and tardy in forming, had now collected, and prepared to burſt with the utmoſt violence. The Houſe of Peers led the way, by throwing out the Eaſt-India Bill; and on the ſubſequent night, at a late hour, his Majeſty ſent to demand the ſeals of office from the two Secretaries of State. An Adminiſtration, at the head of which was Mr. Pitt, and of which he may be ſaid to have formed the vital principle, was inſtantly compoſed. So ſecure, however, were the late Miniſters of their aſcendency in the Houſe of Commons, and in ſuch contempt were theſe efforts of the Crown to liberate itſelf held by them, that when the writ was moved for Appleby, in conſequence of the new Firſt Lord of the Treaſury having vacated his ſeat, it was received with loud, and almoſt

general

general laughter. Even thoſe whoſe judgment and experience in Parliamentary matters were moſt reſpected, ventured to predict that a few weeks would ſee the termination of this fugitive government, either by a gradual or a violent death. For the firſt time ſince the acceſſion of the houſe of Brunſwick; perhaps it may be ſaid ſince the exiſtence of the monarchy, the ſovereign and the people were united in oppoſition to the repreſentatives of the people. The patient and paſſive fortitude of Mr. Pitt ſuſtained him, even more than his talents or integrity, during near three months that this ſiege continued; nor did he adviſe his Sovereign to have recourſe to the laſt conſtitutional meaſure left him, that of diſſolution, till above a hundred and twenty addreſſes, couched in terms of loyalty, and of reprobation againſt the attempt to overturn the prerogative, left no room to heſitate on its popularity, or on the general joy with which it would be received. The elections for the new Parliament, which at no period of the preſent century were ever ſo incorrupt, and ſo free from all miniſterial interference, evinced beyond diſpute, how odious to the nation were the principles and conduct of the late Adminiſtration.

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The Firſt Miniſter emerged at length, from a ſtate of the moſt painful exertion and depreſſion into political day; and the reins of Government, ſo long and ſo violently retained by the "Coalition," fell from their hands. It is from this æra that we may date the ſlow, but progreſſive elevation of the Britiſh empire; which, ſhaken and convulſed during the calamitous period of the American war, had not been leſs agitated by the internal ſtruggles of faction, ſince its termination. But, before we arrive at that exhilarating ſcene, it may be a not leſs pleaſing taſk, to ſurvey the picture of the empire at the moment when the preſent Miniſter commenced his Adminiſtration.

Exhauſted in her finances, and deprived of vigour from the rapid ſucceſſion of ſo many Governments, debility, languor, and decay characteriſed every internal department of the State. The public funds ſeemed to have ſunk below the point of depreſſion, to which even the misfortunes of the war had reduced them; and the confiſcation which had menaced the Eaſt India Company while Mr. Fox's bill impended over their property, had operated to ſink their ſtock below any former precedent. The revenue was diminiſhed and invaded by

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the bold inroads of contraband commerce, which loudly called on the Legiſlature for effectual interpoſition and redreſs. No foreign alliance, or connexion with any of the great powers on the Continent, offered the proſpect of ſupport in a future war. Holland was completely governed by the Republican faction, who, under Van Berkel in the preſent, as under De Witts in the laſt century, had entered into the cloſeſt connexions with the Court of Verſailles; while the Prince of Orange, retaining little more than the name of Stadtholder, was reduced to a ſtate of paſſive inſignificance. Denmark, whoſe ſovereigns had been connected by alliances of blood and policy with the Crown of England for near half a century; and whoſe natural intereſts, in oppoſition to thoſe of Sweden, tended to confirm theſe tyes; had departed from her ancient principles, and no longer cultivated the friendſhip of a kingdom, incapable of extending protection, or rendering itſelf reſpectable in the Baltic. From the Court of Stockholm, attached for ages to France, no demonſtrations of amity could be expected. The Emperor, occupied in ſyſtems of reformation, or projects of aggrandizement; planning the exchange

change of the Netherlands with the Elector Palatine, while he wantonly attacked the Republic of Holland, whoſe troops, in defiance of the moſt ſacred treaties, he had ejected by force from the barrier towns of Flanders: Joſeph, engaged in theſe ambitious enterprizes, and already connected with the Court of Peterſburgh, might be regarded as inimical rather than friendly to Great Britain. Ruſſia continued in a ſtate of ſullen alienation, and Pruſſia betrayed no marks of returning friendſhip; while France, ſtill conducted by the ſplendid and impoſing counſels of Vergennes, appeared to extend, to cement, and to confirm her greatneſs.

The firſt years of the preſent Adminiſtration were principally characteriſed by thoſe beneficial regulations of commerce, and by thoſe ſalutary meaſures of finance, ſo indiſpenſably requiſite in the fallen and impoveriſhed condition of the country. An "Eaſt India bill," mild and temperate in its genius, and widely different from the rapacious and arbitrary principles which had rendered the former ſo univerſally odious, was introduced, and paſſed into a law. The moſt vigorous and efficacious meaſures were adopted for the ſuppreſſion of

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ſmuggling. The royal woods and foreſts, from whence ſo great a ſupport to the navy ought naturally to be derived, but which had been completely abandoned, as an object of national protection, for half a century, did not eſcape the vigilant attention of a Miniſter, anxious to avail himſelf of every public reſource. Proviſion was made for the ſlow, but certain diminution of the national debt, by the appropriation of a million ſterling annually, veſted in the hands of commiſſioners for the purchaſe of ſtock.

The conſolidation of the Cuſtoms and Exciſe, a meaſure of incredible labour and detail, as well as of infinite advantage to commerce, by facilitating and ſimplifying the intricacies attendant on mercantile tranſactions, and the payment of duties; a regulation which in itſelf might immortalize any Adminiſtration, was fully and permanently effected. It had failed under the inert and feeble efforts of Lord North; and its completion, ſo evidently productive of national benefit, drew applauſes even from the enemies and oppoſers of the Miniſter. This long liſt of enlightened and patriotic meaſures was cloſed by the accompliſhment of one of the greateſt, but moſt delicate

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and arduous attempts, which have diſtinguiſhed the preſent century; I mean the "Commercial Treaty with France." An enlarged and liberal policy; the greateſt incitements to general induſtry; the extenſion of commerce, and the extinction of thoſe mutual jealouſies and antipathies, which have for ſo many ages actuated the rival monarchies of France and England: theſe were characteriſtics and principles of a treaty, which, notwithſtanding the ſpecious objections urged againſt it in Parliament, excited univerſal approbation, and extorted involuntary eulogiums. The genius of Great Britain, long obſcured and fettered, began to aſſert its antient energy; and, liberated from domeſtic anarchy, prepared to re-appear on the theatre of Europe, from whence ſhe had been baniſhed by internal calamities and diſtreſs. The ſignature of the "Germanic League," at Berlin, whoſe object was the preſervation of the Empire againſt the ambition of Joſeph the Second, was the firſt ſymptom exhibited of returning attention to the concerns of the Continent; and though this confederation was only acceded to by his Britannic Majeſty in his capacity of Elector of Hanover, yet its effect unqueſtionably extended beyond its

oſtenſible object, and recalled the Engliſh nation again to general view and conſideration.

While under a wiſe, vigorous, and œconomical Government, we were thus reſuming our ancient eminence and dignity among the European States, the clouds of diſcontent and civil commotion were rapidly collecting over the monarchy of France. The finances, involved ſince the ceſſation of the late war in augmenting embarraſſments and inextricable difficulties, might have been found beyond the probity of a Sully, or the capacity of a Colbert, to re-eſtabliſh: in the hands of Caſonne, raiſed to the ſuperintendance, they appeared to preſent a proſpect of public inſolvency as imminent and unavoidable. Though the Court of Verſailles was much diminiſhed in majeſty and ſplendor by the numerous reforms which had ſucceſſively taken place, yet the miniſtry had not ſubſtituted any judicious ſyſtem of frugality, nor adopted any meaſures of energy and wiſdom, either for the alleviation of the national burthens, and liquidation of the enormous debt contracted under the late and preſent King; nor (which ſeemed to be ſtill more neceſſary for their perſonal ſafety) to guard againſt the gather-

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ing ſtorm of public violence and indignation.

Louis the Sixteenth had already, in a conſiderable degree, ſurvived the reſpect, though he continued to enjoy the affection of his people. The firſt years of his reign, conducted by Maurepas and Vergennes, had been diſtinguiſhed by the moſt brilliant ſucceſs; which, while it dazzled and flattered the national vanity, had, in a great meaſure, concealed from view the ruin which it occaſioned in the finances. The King poſſeſſed none of thoſe qualities, either corporal or mental, calculated to faſcinate, and to ſupply the place of more ſolid endowments. His figure was deſtitute of dignity, and his addreſs awkward and embarraſſed. He neither knew how to aſſume the open and winning manners of Henry the Fourth, nor how to adopt the majeſtic condeſcenſion of Louis the Fourteenth. Attached to the Queen from motives rather ſenſual than intellectual, and reſtrained by religious ſcruples from forming any connexions of gallantry with other women, he never, in any inſtance, violated his nuptial fidelity, though ſurrounded by courtiers anxious to anticipate, and eager to adminiſter to his deſires on the firſt inti-

mation. Addicted to the pleaſures of the table, and ſometimes induced to paſs the limits of temperance and ſobriety, he yielded in thoſe moments of facility to the demands which the profuſion of the Queen, and of his brother the Court d'Artois, made it neceſſary for them continually to renew. His own expences were moderate, and his pleaſures few. The former were chiefly confined to the conſtruction of the Caſtle of Compiegne, and the repairs of the palace of Verſailles. The latter conſiſted principally in the amuſement of the chace. Though much neglected in his education during the life of Louis the Fifteenth, his mind was not uninformed; and he had attained ſince his acceſſion to the throne, a very conſiderable degree of acquaintance with polite letters, hiſtory, and geography, by his own private application and ſolitary ſtudy, unaſſiſted by any aid. In the art of reigning, he had unfortunately made little progreſs or proficiency. Unambitious and moderate in his character, he formed no views of conqueſt. He even diſapproved, though only paſſively, of the alliance with America, into which his miniſters had led him in the commencement of his reign; and ſuffered himſelf, with ſome

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degree of averſion and reluctance, to be made an acceſſary to the independence of the Thirteen Colonies.

His parts, however ſluggiſh, inert, and limited, yet were not inadequate to the comprehenſion and diſcharge of the high duties annexed to his ſtation. He unqueſtionably loved his people, and paſſionately deſired, at the price of every perſonal renunciation and ſacrifice, to render his reign dear to France. Averſe to cruelty, and of a nature acceſſible to the impreſſions of pity and humanity, he threw open the gates of the caſtle of Vincennes, which for ages had been one of the principal priſons of ſtate: and mitigated, in numerous inſtances, the rigour of arbitrary power, which his grandfather had ſtrengthened and abuſed. His behaviour on the night of the 5th of October, 1789, has evinced, notwithſtanding the doubts which have been entertained upon that point, that he did not want *perſonal* reſolution or fortitude. But the quality in which he has been eminently deficient, and to the want of which may be principally aſcribed all the late calamities of his life, is *Political* courage and deciſion. In times of tranquillity and repoſe, this defect might not have been perceived;

ceived; or, if discovered, might have yet been limited in its effects; in tempestuous periods, and popular insurrections, it has convulsed the monarchy, and menaced the existence of the throne itself.

The character of the Queen, though strongly contrasted with that of Louis the Sixteenth, was perhaps still more calculated to alienate the affections and excite the clamours of the nation. Of a figure favoured by nature, and adorned by gracious and insinuating manners, she was formed to attach mankind. The short period which elapsed, subsequent to her marriage with the Dauphin, in 1770, and previous to her ascending the throne, was marked by the most general partiality, and by all the flattering prognostics of poetry and genius, who anticipated the future glories and felicity of her reign*. Her education in the court of Vienna, under the severe inspection of Maria Theresa, a Princess eminent for chastity and piety, seemed

* It was during this brilliant and transitory portion of her life, that she was seen by the author of a production, which has recently made its appearance in this country; and which, from the celebrity of the writer, as well as from the interest excited by the subject itself, has been read with

ed in ſome meaſure to guarantee the exiſtence of theſe qualities in her daughter. But, Marie Antoinette appears to have inherited ſcarce any of the characteriſtic virtues or vices of the Auſtrian family, except her attachment to the Houſe from whence ſhe ſprung. The fond predictions of adulation, offered to the Dauphineſs, were not realized by the Queen. Her levity of manners; her expenſive prodigality; her diſſipation; her attachments; her retirements; perhaps, more than all theſe defects, her ſuppoſed abuſe of the aſcendant which ſhe had acquired and preſerved over her huſband,

with univerſal avidity. It is not my intention to criticiſe, or to appreciate the merits of a performance, which embraces ſo many objects, and ranges over ſo vaſt a field, as the late Revolution in France opens to a creative imagination. With ſome errors and ſome blemiſhes, it appears to me to be a moſt extraordinary exhibition of genius, fancy, and in many parts, of deep, able, and judicious reaſoning. Its author is entitled to ſomething more than the mere approbation of every man who reſpects kingly power, or eſtabliſhed Government; and who deprecates the violence of popular innovation. Perhaps the portrait of the Dauphineſs may be too highly coloured; but it is the colouring of Titian, and not of a common artiſt. Indeed, thoſe who remember the preſent Queen before the death of Louis the Fifteenth, muſt admit that ſhe was then calculated to excite ſentiments of perſonal admiration and delight, in no ordinary degree.

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gradually eſtranged every order of the people; and eventually, as the public embarraſſments augmented, rendered her generally odious. Her actions were examined with the moſt ſevere and unjuſt ſpirit of national enquiry. Her political connections with the Imperial ambaſſador were as loudly arraigned on one hand, as her perſonal intimacy with the Comte d'Artois was ſtrongly cenſured on the other. Imputations the moſt injurious to her fame as a woman and a wife, were ſuperadded to accuſations of her diſpoſition to ſacrifice the intereſt, and ſquander the treaſures of the kingdom over which ſhe reigned, in order to aggrandize her brother the Emperor. She was accuſed of miniſtering to the weakneſſes, and even ſtimulating the appetites of the King, with a view to avail herſelf of his fondneſs, or temporary privation of reflexion.

The continual viſits, and long interviews which ſhe accorded to Mademoiſelle Bertin, excited ſentiments of diſapprobation in thoſe, who thought the leiſure of the firſt Queen in Europe indecently thrown away in diſquiſitions upon a cap, or conſultations upon a handkerchief. Her purchaſe of the palace of St. Cloud, in the midſt of general pecuniary diſtreſs, was

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taxed with equal imprudence and profuſion. Her frequent retirements to Trianon were ſtigmatized, as exhibiting ſcenes unfit for the public eye. The myſterious and inexplicable tranſactions relative to the famous necklace, aſſerted to have been purchaſed by her; although the Cardinal de Rohan and the Comteſſe de la Motte were the victims of it, yet had left impreſſions diſadvantagious to her honour in the minds of a nation, diſpoſed to ſee all her actions through an unfavourable medium. Her predilection for, and attachment to the Ducheſs de Polignac, ſuffered the moſt malignant comments of ſatyrical prejudice; and the liberal donations, or high employments, with which that family was diſtinguiſhed, neceſſarily added to the load of public execration. Theſe accumulated topics of popular invective and animadverſion, were circulated with rapidity, and received with equal avidity, by an ignorant and credulous multitude, who filled the arcades of the "Palais Royal," and who imbibed the moſt inveterate deteſtation of their Queen, as conceiving her the author of the public diſtreſs. They had already, in ſome degree, marked her out as a victim to the general indignation; and anxiouſly waited for the favoura-

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ble occaſion which ſhould liberate the Sovereign and the nation from the pretended evils of her influence, and leave Louis the Sixteenth to the impulſe of his natural beneficence and affection for his people.

The Count de Provence, the eldeſt of the King's two brothers, acted a very inferior and ſubordinate part upon this great theatre. Either deſtitute of talents to excite public attention, or repreſſing them from motives of prudence and ſituation, he appeared only in the back ground; and formed a contraſt to the impoſing qualities which diſtinguiſhed the Count d'Artois. Of a figure much more graceful and elegant than either of his brothers, this Prince was likewiſe adorned with more dignified, if not more courteous manners. Attached to the Queen from ſimilarity of taſte and character, he even exceeded her in profuſion, expence and diſſipation. After having paſſed the morning on the "Plaine des Sablons," in the dreſs and occupations of a jockey, he only retired from theſe fatigues, to repoſe in the arms of Madamoiſelle Contat. His little palace of "Bagatelle," in the "Bois de Boulogne," was at once the ſcene of the moſt refined and voluptuous debauch, and of the

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moſt profligate pleaſures which luxury could deviſe or aſſemble, Two ſons, already advancing faſt towards manhood, and whoſe conſtitutions ſeemed to promiſe a vigorous health, attracted the eyes of the nation, and gave him a manifeſt ſuperiority to the Count de Provence, whoſe marriage had not been fruitful. The feeble and debilitated ſtate of the Dauphin, whoſe infirmities already appeared to menace a premature end, left only the Duke de Normandie between him and the eventual ſucceſſion to the Crown. Though not endowed with any eminent talents, yet, as being of a character more decided and affirmative than either the King or the Count de Provence, he came more forward to public view; and by his adherence to the Queen, influenced very conſiderably on affairs of ſtate.

At a greater diſtance from the throne, but decorated with the title of Firſt Prince of the Blood, was ſeen the Duke of Orleans. Poſſeſſed of an immenſe revenue, and having in reverſion all the domains of his father-in-law, the Duke de Penthievre, he might be eſteemed the richeſt ſubject in Europe. His reputation for generoſity and munificence, bore, however, no proportion to his ample poſſeſſi-

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ons: on the contrary, though profuſe in the gratification of his appetites, he was accuſed by the popular voice of an attention to the arts of œconomy, unworthy of his high birth and ſplendid fortune. Emulous of being thought to reſemble Henry the Fourth, and the Regent Duke of Orleans, from both of which Princes he derived his deſcent, he had no ſimilarity to either, except in the foibles which ſhaded the character of the former, and in the vices which diſgraced the conduct of the latter. The beneficence, the heroic valour, and clemency of mind, which characteriſed the King of Navarre, were not to be traced in his degenerate grandſon. The ſublime talents, the military genius, and the various endowments of a ſtateſman and a general, which combined in the Regent, were as vainly ſought in the Duke of Orleans.

Abandoned to pleaſures of every deſcription, he yet had no elevation or refinement in his amuſements. His perſonal courage, which had ſuſtained ſome injury, and excited ſome ſarcaſtic comments, from his behaviour under d'Orvilliers in 1778, had not been retrieved by his unpropitious attempt to ſignalize himſelf, by accompanying Charles and Robert into the air. The malignant reflexions formerly thrown

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out upon his intrepidity as a naval officer, were followed by paſquinades upon his ſuppoſed apprehenſions in the balloon; and he was ſaid to have been as unfortunate in the park of Meudon, where he alighted from his aerial excurſion, as he had been at an aerlier period of his life, in the vicinity of the iſlands of Uſhant. Notwithſtanding theſe aſperſions and defects, he yet poſſeſſed qualities, which if conducted by judgment, might have redeemed him from the load of obloquy under which he was oppreſſed. His talents were certainly above mediocrity; his mind enlarged, his manners condeſcending and popular, and his underſtanding cultivated by letters, and an extenſive acquaintance with mankind.

He was the only Prince of the Houſe of Bourbon who had ever viſited England in perſon; the Duke d'Alençon, brother to Henry the Third of France, having been the laſt, who in the proſecution of his deſign to marry Elizabeth, had paſſed over into theſe kingdoms. The diſorders in the finances, and the deſperate, or arbitrary meaſures to which the Court was neceſſitated perpetually to have recourſe, in order to raiſe new loans and obtain ſupplies, had given the Duke of Orleans an

occaſion,

occaſion, of which he gladly availed himſelf, to regain his long loſt popularity. To this public and oſtenſible cauſe of his alienation from the Court, were added ſome private miſunderſtandings, which had their origin in the interference of the Queen to prevent an alliance, which was projected between the eldeſt ſon of the Count d'Artois, and the daughter of the Duke of Orleans: a marriage which it was more than poſſible might eventually elevate the young Princeſs to the Throne of France. Animated and ſtimulated by theſe motives, he ſeemed to awake from the diſſolute pleaſures in which he had been plunged, and to aſſume the more dignified and ingratiating character of an oppoſer of deſpotiſm, and a protector of the people. The change of conduct ſoon produced its full effect; and he paſſed with the moſt rapid tranſition, from the contempt and reprobation of the inhabitants of Paris, to the height of favour and general attachment.

Such was the aſpect which the Court of Verſailles preſented at the commencement of the year 1787, and ſuch were the principal characters and perſonages of which it was compoſed. The ſources of diſcontent and even of

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revolt and inſurrection, were numerous and augmenting. The ordinary channels of revenue were either dried up, or had become inadequate to the exigencies of the Government. Recourſe was therefore reluctantly had to other modes of obtaining ſupplies; and the convocation of the "Notables" was propoſed by Calonne to the King, and adopted immediately, as the only remaining expedient.

In theſe critical circumſtances of perplexity and diſtreſs, Vergennes, whoſe high reputation and ſuperior talents had hitherto diffuſed a luſtre over the councils of France, and alone ſuſtained the tottering load of public credit and national grandeur: this celebrated Miniſter, the ſucceſſor of Maurepas, and who, ſince his death, had during eight years held the firſt place in the Adminiſtration, was removed by death from a ſcene, to which all his abilities would probably have been found unequal. Fortunate in his alliances, in his wars, in his negociations, in his acquiſition of fame, in the enjoyment of the royal favour and the popular opinion, he was yet more happy in not ſurviving theſe frail and uncertain poſſeſſions. Unlike to Louvois and to Fleury, he neither forfeited the affection of his Sovereign,

nor

nor outlived his own talents and capacity. Admired, regretted, and lamented, his death ſeemed to be the ſignal which unlooſed the jarring elements of civil commotion, and which marked the æra of the extinction of tranquillity and obedience.

The diſmiſſion of Calonne followed in a few weeks; and the elevation of an eccleſiaſtic, the Archbiſhop of Toulouſe, to the ſupreme controul of the finances, whatever expectations it might at firſt awaken of alleviation and redreſs, only tended in the event to aggravate the national calamities, and to encreaſe the popular diſcontent. New ſyſtems, equally unproductive as the preceding, and only calculated for temporary relief, afforded neither a remedy to the preſſing neceſſities of the court, nor to the clamorous grievances of the people. The "Notables" were found to be equally incompetent and averſe, to adduce any cure for theſe multiplied diſtempers of the ſtate. They were therefore diſſolved; and the nation already began to demand an aſſembly of the "States General," as the laſt and only meaſure competent to extricate and retrieve them from the danger of impending bankruptcy and ruin.

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But the troubles and internal feuds of the Dutch commonwealth, which had been long nouriſhed and fed by the political liberality of the cabinet of Verſailles; which had grown up under the foſtering hand of Vergennes, and which a ſeries of deep and artful negociations had inflamed and augmented, now approached rapidly to their criſis. Never could they have attained to their maturity at a more inauſpicious moment for France; and never was the triumph of fortune over the machinations of policy more conſpicuouſly exemplified.

William the Fifth, Prince of Orange, poſſeſſed the Stadtholderate of the United Provinces. Allied by name rather than by blood, to the great Houſe of Naſſau, ſo fertile in heroes and in legiſlators, few traces of the ſublime qualities which have rendered that family immortal, were to be diſcovered in their ſucceſſor. But, in the Princeſs his wife, ſprung from the union of the houſes of Brandenburgh and Naſſau, the characteriſtic energy of both was viſible. Driven out of the Province of Holland by the indignities and inſults with which the republican faction had treated the Prince, whom they had compelled to retire to Nimeguen, ſhe had the courage to ſet out for

the Hague, and, unattended by any guards, to traverſe a hoſtile country, in the hope of adjuſting by her preſence, addreſs, and flexibility, the points in diſpute between her huſband and the States. In this arduous and delicate attempt ſhe was fruſtrated, and even her perſon laid under an arreſt, by the brutality of one of the military officers in the ſervice of the Republic. Obliged to abandon her project, and to return to Nimeguen, ſhe invoked the protection and aſſiſtance of the King of Pruſſia, to re-inſtate the exiled Stadtholder in the hereditary dignities and offices, of which he had been ſo unjuſtly and unconſtitutionally deprived. It was not to her uncle that ſhe addreſſed theſe entreaties. The great Frederick was no more: he had paid the common tribute to mortality, and had expired at Potzdam under the accumulating weight of age and diſeaſes. But, though he no longer animated in perſon the councils of Berlin, the vigour of his genius ſurvived: it ſeemed even to have attained new force in the hands of a Sovereign, whoſe more active period of life led him to adopt meaſures of deciſion, and whoſe near relationſhip to the Princeſs of Orange ſtimulated him to warmer exertions in her behalf.

The

The juncture was favourable to the Pruſſian interpoſition; and England, under the auſpices of a Miniſter prompt to ſeize the occaſion of again re-appearing with dignity and effect on the Continent, avowedly joined and aided the attack upon the enemies of the Houſe of Orange. An army of about fifteen thouſand men, commanded by the firſt military genius in Europe, the Duke of Brunſwick, entered the territories of the States General, in September, 1727, and over-ran with the ſame rapidity that Louis the Fourteenth had done in the laſt century, the province of Holland. Amſterdam itſelf, the centre of diſaffection, and the laſt aſylum of the French and republican factions, after a ſhort and ineffectual ſtruggle, capitulated, and received the conqueror. A complete, but almoſt bloodleſs revolution was effected; and the Hague, ſo long a prey to diſcord and to animoſity, ſaw the Stadtholder return, and to occupy his high ſtation, with every expreſſion of loyalty and attachment.

France, embarraſſed, and incapable from her domeſtic misfortunes, of interfering either with honour to herſelf, or efficacy to her friends, though ſhe appeared to make a feeble effort in their favour, yet ultimately gave way

to the ſtorm, and conſented to diſarm; nay more, publicly to deny her having ever intended to ſuſtain that party, in whoſe ſupport ſhe had expended her treaſures, and for whom, in more auſpicious æras, ſhe would have involved Europe in blood and hoſtility. The high reputation which ſo ſignal a ſucceſs reflected on the councils of Great Britain, was contraſted and rendered more ſplendid, by a compariſon with the fallen ſtate of her ancient rival, who, only a few years preceding theſe events, in conjunction with America, had ſeemed to give laws in every quarter of the globe. The energy and wiſe precaution of the Miniſter did not, however, remit its vigilance, or content itſelf with having liberated the Dutch Republic, and reinſtated the Stadtholder. Attentive to profit of this fortunate and propitious moment, and to avail himſelf of the gratitude with which the aſſiſtance extended to Holland had equally impreſſed the Government and the people, he cemented thoſe ſentiments by immediately framing, and eventually concluding a defenſive treaty with the United Provinces. It was ſigned in April, 1788, and was evidently built on the model of that, which had been terminated under the auſpices of Vergennes,

nes, between France and Holland, towards the close of the year 1785. Reciprocal succours, naval and military, were stipulated; and the bands of political union were drawn as close, as human wisdom and mutual interest could devise.

This alliance, so much approved, and so highly beneficial to England, was succeeded by a second, similar in its tenor, nature, and tendency, between the Courts of St. James's and Berlin, which was ratified in the month of August of the same year. They had been preceded by a subsidiary treaty between England and the Landgrave of Hesse, which enabled the former power, on the payment of a certain annual sum, to demand from the latter, at a very short notice, a body of twelve thousand troops.

Thus, in the space of only four years which might be said to have elapsed since the complete triumph of the Sovereign and the nation over the "Coalition," had Great Britain, under the conduct of a Minister who had not yet attained his thirtieth year, risen from a state of unexampled depression, to her antient superiority among the European kingdoms. The finances had been re-established by a system of

unremitting

unremitting and ſevere œconomy. Commerce, aided and emancipated by the wiſe regulations of an enlarged policy, opened new ſources, and navigated ſeas hitherto unknown or unexplored, in the proſecution of its objects. Public credit attained a point of elevation and permanence, unparelleled ſince the commencement of the unfortunate war with America. The councils of England, conducted on principles, not of a crooked duplicity, but of rectitude and magnanimity, excited reſpect and approbation in the ſurrounding ſtates, while they diffuſed proſperity and felicity over every part of the iſland.

Political alliances and connections on the Continent; added the proſpect of ſtability to every meaſure which was calculated for internal ſecurity or commercial advantage. The calamities of Lord North's Adminiſtration, and the anarchy which ſucceeded that unfortunate period: the defalcation of thirteen provinces, and of both the Floridas from the empire: the diſgraces of Saratoga, and of the Cheſapeake: the tumults, and conflagration of London: in a word, the varied and accumulated misfortunes, which for a long ſeries of years oppreſſed, and had almoſt overwhelmed the commonwealth,

wealth, were already eraſed from the recollection. A mild and happy calm had ſmoothed theſe troubled waves. The Sovereign was deſervedly dear to every rank and order of his ſubjects, who united in regarding him as their father and benefactor. The Government, beloved at home, was reſpected abroad; and the people, happy beyond the example of former times, looked up with equal affection and veneration towards the ſource of theſe multiplied benefits.

But in the midſt of this flattering aſpect of affairs, an unexpected and diſaſtrous change was preparing to manifeſt itſelf, which no human prudence could have foreſeen, or precautions delayed. We were deſtined to experience in its fulleſt extent, the mutability of fortune, and the fragility of greatneſs; to hold out a leſſon to our own, and to future times, that the ſplendor and felicity of man, however ſolid the foundations on which they may ſeem to repoſe, are in the hands of a ſuperior Being, who confers, or withdraws them in an inſtant. I am arrived at that awful and affecting period, when the feelings of all thoſe who ſhall peruſe theſe ſheets, will anticipate my own; and which, from a variety of motives, I ſhould

wiſh

wiſh to cover under a veil of oblivion, if the publicity of the great leading facts, and ſtill more, if the inſtruction conveyed by the narration itſelf, as one of the moſt intereſting portions of modern annals, did not ſupercede my perſonal inclinations. It is not, however, either in my plan or my intention, to relate the *private* hiſtory of that extraordinary period; or to drag into daylight facts and anecdotes, which, curious and entertaining as they muſt appear to poſterity, are, in every ſenſe, unfit for the peruſal of the preſent age. Sentiments of duty, delicacy, and reſpect towards a Prince inexpreſſibly dear to his people: towards a Queen, who during near thirty years, and in every relation of domeſtic life, has been blameleſs and exemplary: towards thoſe illuſtrious perſons, on whom the ſceptre of George the Third muſt, in the ordinary progreſs of events, at ſome future, and as we truſt, far diſtant period, devolve: even motives of prudence, decorum, and propriety, arreſt my pen; and prevent me from ſhading a picture, the outline only of which it is either wiſe or neceſſary to hold up to the public eye, placed as we are ſo near the object.

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The very nature of the ſubject is, indeed, ſuch as to add peculiar embarraſſments to thoſe general ones, which preſent themſelves in the way of every man who ſhall venture to relate the tranſactions of the time in which he lives, and of which he forms himſelf, though an imperceptible, yet a real and efficient part. Nor is it even a ſufficient juſtification or inducement to undertake ſuch a taſk, that the mild genius of the century in which we write, or the freedom which enables us to dictate without apprehenſion, appear to liberate us from every reſtraint. There are feelings in a generous mind, anterior to all written law, and far ſuperior in their operation to thoſe regulations which are impoſed by Courts of Judicature, or legiſlative bodies. It is to theſe reſtrictions that I ſhall ſubject my pen, while the great chain of events may yet be preſented to the Engliſh people, and the fidelity of hiſtorical truth be preſerved inviolate. "Ut non modo caſus, eventuſque rerum, qui plerumque fortuiti ſunt, ſed ratio etiam, cauſæque noſcantur." Like the ſublime writer whom I have juſt cited, and who flouriſhed under the golden reign of Trajan, we too, "rara temporum felicitate, ubi ſentire quæ velis, et quæ ſentias dicere licet,"

cet," may, unawed by power, affix the ſentiment of approbation and of cenſure, in conformity to our own conviction. Such is equally my deſign and determination. But it is only for thoſe who can elevate their minds above the little partialities and prejudices of the day, that it belongs to appreciate the performance of this promiſe; and to decide how far the preſent work may venture to lay claim to any portion of Roman energy and freedom, or how far the immortal writings of antiquity would be ſullied and degraded by a compariſon with this production.

It is not eaſy to imagine or to parallel in the hiſtory of the preſent century, a period of more perfect ſerenity than that which England preſented in the autumn of 1788. The King, accompanied by the Queen, and ſurrounded by his family, after having tried the effects of a relaxation from public buſineſs, and of the medicinal waters of Cheltenham, had returned to Windſor; not, indeed, in a ſtate of vigorous health, but by no means in any ſuch declining ſtate of indiſpoſition, as to excite alarm among his ſubjects. The Prince of Wales, as uſual, paſſed the ſummer at his Marine Pavillion at Brighthelmſtone. Mr. Pitt,

occupied

occupied in the functions of his ſtation, was detained in the vicinity of the capital; while Mr. Fox, whoſe faculties of body and mind had been not a little exerciſed and exhauſted, by a toilſome attendance at Covent Garden during the extreme heats of Auguſt, which was thought requiſite to ſecure the election of Lord John Townſend as member for Weſtminſter; indulged a degree of neceſſary repoſe, and withdrew for a ſhort time from the hurry of political life. He quitted England, and repaired to Switzerland and Italy, as a ſcene calculated to amuſe and entertain, while it reſtored and invigorated a conſtitution, impaired by conſtant exertion. The great leaders of Miniſtry and Oppoſition, having laid aſide their political animoſities, were diſperſed in peaceful inactivity over every part of the kingdom. From this ſtate of public recreation and felicity, the nation was rudely and ſuddenly awoke, by the reports of his Majeſty being attacked with an unexpected and dangerous illneſs. The preciſe nature of it was for ſeveral days unaſcertained and unexplained, even to thoſe whoſe reſidence near the court ſhould have enabled them to obtain early and authentic information. Meanwhile, fame augment-

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ed the evil, and the death of the Sovereign was believed to have either already taken place, or to be imminent and inevitable.

The grief and diſtraction which were manifeſted in every part of the iſland, on the publication of this calamitous event, can be only compared with that of the Roman people, on the news of Germanicus being ſeized with mortal ſymptoms at Antioch; as the diſtreſsful ſituation of the Queen bore ſome reſemblance to that of Agrippina. "Paſſim ſilentia et gemitus, nihil compoſitum in oſtentationem; et quanquam neque inſignibus lugentium abſtinerent, altius animis mœrebant." Time, however, gradually divulged the truth, and changed the apprehenſions of the nation for the ſituation of the King. His diſorder was underſtood to have fallen upon the brain, and to have produced, as might be expected, a temporary privation of reaſon. As the cauſe of this alienation of mind was extraneous and violent, it might be hoped that it could only be of ſhort duration: but the iſſue was uncertain, while the ſuſpenſion of all government, and of every function attached to the kingly dignity, was immediate and diſputable. A ſpecies of interregnum in fact took place; though unaccompanied

accompanied by any of thoſe circumſtances, which uſually characterize and accompany that unfortunate ſtate. The kingdom, anxious, and with eyes directed towards their Sovereign, betrayed no ſymptoms of confuſion, anarchy, or civil commotion. The Firſt Miniſter continued to exerciſe, by a general ſubmiſſion and conſent, the powers delegated to him before the King's indiſpoſition; and the political machine, well conſtructed, and properly organized, ſuſtained no derangement or injury whatſoever from this ſhock, except thoſe inſeparably connected with delay in the tranſactions or negociations pending with foreign courts.

Meanwhile, the Heir to the monarchy had quitted Brighthelmſtone on the firſt information of his father's malady, and repaired to Windſor, whither he was followed by the Duke of York. Phyſicians were called in, though ineffectually; and as the nature of the diſtemper and of its final termination opened a wide field to conjecture, change and alteration, an expreſs was ſent to overtake Mr. Fox in whatever part of the Continent he might be found; and to intreat that he would return without delay to England.

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The two Houſes of Parliament, in conſequence of the preceding prorogation, met in a few days ſubſequent to theſe extraordinary events. The general agitation and curioſity, even if they had not been aided by any other emotions of hope and fear, of ambition, and of public duty, would alone have produced a numerous attendance. Mr. Pitt opened the ſubject of their meeting in a very conciſe and pathetic manner; lamented the occaſion, expreſſed his hope that the cauſe would ſpeedily be removed, and in purſuance of that idea, adviſed an immediate adjournment of a fortnight. The propoſition was received in deep ſilence by the oppoſite ſide of the Houſe, and aſſented to in mute acquieſcence. Their leader was not yet arrived; and conſequently time was wanted to adjuſt and determine on their plan of action, under circumſtances ſo delicate and unprecedented. In the interval which took place, his Majeſty was removed to the palace of Kew. The Prince of Wales returned to Carlton Houſe; and Mr. Fox, impatiently expected, after a journey which he performed with incredible expedition from Bologna, in a very infirm and diſordered ſtate of health, arrived

rived in London, and aſſumed his juſt pre-eminence in the counſels of his party.

Thoſe counſels evinced their nature and object, as ſoon as the late adjournment was at an end; and Mr. Fox, generouſly, though perhaps injudiciouſly, ſtepping forward in the ſenate, rather laid claim to the vacant ſceptre in the name and on the behalf of the Heir Apparent, as belonging and devolving to him of right; than preferred his pretenſions with modeſty and ſubmiſſion, at the bar of the aſſembled nation. Perhaps a ſtep more injurious to the great perſonage whom it was intended to ſerve, or more pregnant with conſequences to be deprecated, of every kind, could not have been deviſed or executed. Perhaps, too, when time ſhall have withdrawn that curtain which is ſtill ſtretched acroſs theſe recent and intereſting events, we may diſcover, that in advancing ſo unqualified a demand of the regency, he did not preciſely follow the dictates of his own elevated mind, and illuminated judgment. It wakened a jealous ſpirit of enquiry into the ſuppoſed origin and foundation of that aſſerted right, in the breaſts even of the moſt liberal and unprejudiced. It compelled Adminiſtration to probe that problematical and obſcure

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part of the Britiſh Conſtitution. It reminded thoſe, to whom the writings of Shakeſpear were familiar, of that affecting and pathetic ſcene, where Henry the Fourth, under a temporary privation of his faculties, finds on his recovery, that his eldeſt ſon has carried away the inſignia of his royal dignity, which, had he only waited a few hours, would have been his by devolution.

The diſcernment of Mr. Pitt ſaw, and inſtantly enabled him to profit of this error in his antagoniſt. He demanded the diſcuſſion and deciſion of ſo great and leading a principle, which led to concluſions unlimited and undefined, as well as ſubverſive of the tenure on which a King of England had originally received his crown; previous to any ulterior diſpoſition and diſtribution of offices. He was joined by the majority of the Houſe in this requiſition, and thus commenced his reſiſtance under auſpices and circumſtances peculiarly fortunate. It was in vain that the Prince of Wales, already rendered ſenſible of the injury which his cauſe had ſuſtained, equally in Parliament and among the people, by Mr. Fox's unqualified claim of right, endeavoured to wave and prevent all further diſcuſſion of ſo

invidious

invidious a ſubject. It was in vain that the Duke of York, in his brother's name, and by his authority, renounced any ſuch aſſumption of power, and made this public declaration in the Houſe of Lords. Nor was Mr. Fox's attempt to qualify his firſt aſſertion, and to give it a more mitigated ſenſe, received with better ſucceſs in the other Houſe. Parliament, rouſed to a ſenſe of the neceſſity of declaring itſelf ſolely competent to fill the vacant throne, proceeded to that great act without circumlocution or delay; and having pronounced upon this important preliminary, then decided that the Prince of Wales ſhould be invited and requeſted to accept the Regency, under certain limitations. The month of December elapſed in theſe conteſts, and the year 1789 commenced under the moſt gloomy preſages. Mutual aſperity and reproach embittered every debate. No appearances of convaleſcence or recovery, ſo ardently anticipated by the nation, had yet manifeſted themſelves in the malady of the King. In addition to the keeneſt ſenſations of private diſtreſs as a mother and a wife, the Queen ſaw herſelf on the point of being placed in the moſt painful, though indiſpenſably neceſſary, ſituation; that of being en-

truſted with the care of the Royal Perſon, and of ſtanding in a ſort of rivality and competition to her eldeſt ſon. The Prince, who aſpired to a Regency, unfettered by any reſtrictions, betrayed in his reply to a letter which the Firſt Miniſter addreſſed to him, and in which the great features of that intended delegation of the Royal power were delineated, his warm reſentment and diſſatisfaction at many of thoſe defalcations. He concluded, however, by reluctantly and coldly conſenting to receive it, curtailed and degraded as it might be by Miniſterial or Parliamentary diſtruſt.

A ſecond examination of the phyſicians who had attended his Majeſty during the courſe of his diſorder, which took place before a Committee of the Houſe of Commons, and which was certainly not conducted on the part of Oppoſition with either delicacy or judgment, tended to throw very little light on the great object of public enquiry; the probable duration and period of this afflicting malady. Mr. Pitt conſtantly and warmly maintained the probability of its happy termination; and regarding it as neither diſtant nor hopeleſs, made the reſumption of the Royal power by the Sovereign with facility and celerity, as ſoon as he

ſhould

ſhould be enabled to wield the ſceptre, the firſt and leading principle of all his meaſures and propoſitions. The adherents of the Prince of Wales ſaw the proſpect of his father's recovery through a very different medium, and conceived of it not only as improbable, but as hourly augmenting in that improbability. They were ſuſtained in this opinion by Warren, as the Miniſter was confirmed in his oppoſite ſentiment by Willis; two phyſicians, on whoſe contradictory prognoſtics and apprehenſions each party implicitly relied. The former, at the ſummit of his profeſſion, and unqueſtionably poſſeſſed of great medical ſkill, was yet accuſed by the public voice of leaning in his inclination towards the party of the Prince. The latter brought from a diſtant province to attend the Sovereign under his ſevere diſorder, and having been peculiarly converſant in that ſpecies of diſeaſe, boldly and early aſſerted that he entertained ſcarcely any doubts of the King's perfect re-eſtabliſhment at no remote period. The event fully juſtified his prediction.

Meanwhile the introduction of the propoſitions upon which the Regency Bill was meant to be founded, and the reſtrictions intended to

be impoſed upon the power of the future Regent, which were brought forward by the Firſt Miniſter in the Houſe of Commons, carried the rage and virulence of party to its utmoſt height. The negation of the power of creating Peers: the nomination of a council to aſſiſt the Queen: and the complete reſervation of the Royal houſehold, were all arraigned and condemned in the warmeſt terms by Mr. Fox, as dictated only by ambition, and not originating in ſtate neceſſity, or even in regard to the ſituation of the Monarch. The hiſtory of France under the unhappy reign of Charles the Sixth, was cited, as bearing a manifeſt reſemblance to the preſent diſaſtrous period; and a Queen, equally venerated and beloved by the nation, was compared to the unnatural Iſabella of Bavaria; as her ſon the Dauphin's abandoned and perſecuted ſtate was aſſerted to be ſimilar to that of the Prince of Wales. Unmoved by theſe invectives, and ſuſtained by conſcious rectitude of intention, the miniſter ſteadily purſued his way: nor was he, in this critical and diſtreſſing moment, deſerted by either Houſes of Parliament. The Chancellor, who, at the commencement of the King's illneſs, had been ſuppoſed to have liſtened to propoſals for

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forming a part of a new Adminiſtration; anxious to evince the falſehood of ſo unjuſt an aſperſion, and to give the moſt unequivocal proofs of loyalty and of adherence to his Sovereign under the preſent circumſtances, collected all the energy of his mind in the various appeals, which he ſucceſsfully made to the honour and patriotiſm of the Houſe of Lords.

In this ſtage of the public buſineſs, at a moment when the King's ſituation appeared moſt to exclude hope, and while the Houſe of Commons were fully occupied in framing the principal component parts of the act which was to eſtabliſh the Regency, Mr. Fox withdrew from the ſcene, and quitting London, retired to Bath. His diſordered ſtate of health was aſſigned as a pretext for this ſeceſſion at ſo extraordinary and critical a juncture; but the public conceived the motives of it to originate in different cauſes. Diſſention and jealouſy had already pervaded the counſels of Carlton Houſe. The diſtribution of offices under the approaching Regency had produced alienation among the chiefs. An interiour Cabinet, different in its views, and oppoſite in its objects to the great oſtenſible leaders of the party attached to the

Prince

Prince of Wales, had ſet up a ſeparate ſtandard, and formed a diſtinct intereſt. Difference of opinion had manifeſted itſelf upon ſome very delicate, and perſonal points. Cabal and intrigue had penetrated into the cloſet. His Royal Highneſs was generally ſuppoſed to have experienced difficulties, if not peremptory refuſals of gratifying his wiſhes, on the part of the Duke of Portland; and that, in relation to perſons and things peculiarly near his heart. Theſe numerous ſources of diſunion were ſtill, however, in ſome meaſure concealed from view, by their very nature, and the mutual intereſt or honour of the parties themſelves. The great acts of parliamentary legiſlation proceeded, and were nearly approaching to their termination. A very ſhort period, probably not exceeding three days, muſt have completed the bill, which was to declare the incapacity of the Sovereign to conduct the national affairs, and to transfer the ſceptre, though with diminiſhed influence, to his ſon. The members of Adminiſtration were on the point of reſigning their charges, and the new Miniſtry, already ſettled, prepared to enter on office: while the Engliſh people, fondly attached by every ſenſe of loyalty and affection to their Monarch, as well

well as from gratitude and eſteem to the Firſt Miniſter, in dejection and ſilence looked on, and ſaw the Government transferred to others, who, whatever abilities they might collectively poſſeſs, certainly neither merited nor enjoyed the general approbation and confidence.

But the term of interregnum and misfortune was now arrived; and the impending calamity which had menaced England with all the evils of a Regency, far more to be deprecated and dreaded than thoſe from which the country had eſcaped in 1784, was ſuddenly and unexpectedly diſſipated. The diſorder, under which the King had ſuffered during three months, and whoſe violence had hitherto appeared to baffle all medical ſkill and exertion, gradually, but rapidly ſubſided. Sanity of mind and reaſon reſumed their ſeat, and left no trace of temporary ſubverſion. Time confirmed the cure, and reſtored to his ſubjects a Prince, rendered ſupremely and peculiarly dear to them by the recent proſpect and apprehenſion of his loſs. The viſion of a Regency faded and diſappeared, as the Sovereign came forward to public view, and was totally extinguiſhed by his reſumption of all the regal functions. The demonſtrations of national joy far exceeded

exceeded any recorded in the Engliſh annals, and were probably more real and unfeigned than ever were offered on ſimilar occaſions. It was not only that a King, beloved and reſpected, was recovered from the moſt afflicting of all ſituations incident to humanity, and enabled to re-aſcend the throne. Sentiments of diſapprobation and of general condemnation, affixed to the meaſures and conduct of the oppoſite party, heightened the emotions of pleaſure, by a compariſon with that ſtate from which the kingdom had been ſo fortunately delivered. No efforts of deſpotiſm, or mandates of abſolute power could have produced the illuminations, which the capital exhibited in teſtimony of its loyalty; and theſe proofs of attachment were renewed, and even augmented, on the occaſion of his Majeſty's firſt appearance in public, and his ſolemn proceſſion to St. Paul's, to return thanks to Heaven for his recovery. Serenity and tranquillity, ſo long baniſhed, reſumed their place, and ſoon effaced the recollection of a calamity, not more awful and alarming in its appearance and progreſs, than ſpeedily and happily extinguiſhed.

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The attention of Europe, which had been ſo powerfully attracted towards England during the continuance of the ſevere indiſpoſition of George the Third, was now to be directed to another object ſcarcely leſs productive of change, and big with the moſt important conſequences. France, ſo long inured to ſervitude, and only tracing the exiſtence of her liberties in the page of forgotten hiſtorians, or antiquaries: whoſe fetters, originally impoſed by Richlieu, and ſtrengthened by Mazarin, had been rivetted by the lapſe of near two centuries; by the proud tyranny of Louis the Fourteenth, and by the profligate deſpotiſm of his ſucceſſor: France, ſtimulated by the writings of genius and philoſophy, which in defiance of arbitrary power, have illuminated and dignified the preſent age, aſpired to freedom. The weakneſs of the Sovereign; the incapacity or timidity of his Miniſters; the exhauſted ſtate of the treaſury and finances; the unexampled and pertinacious oppoſition of the Parliament of Paris to regiſter, or ſanction the Royal edicts for the impoſition of new taxes; the failure of the harveſts, and conſequent augmentation in the price of bread; all

theſe concurring circumſtances contributed to produce and accelerate a revolution.

The various Parliaments of the kingdom, in terms of energy and firmneſs to which they had been long diſuſed, clamorouſly demanded the immediate convocation of the "States General," as the only conſtitutional, or adequate remedy to the diſtempers of the ſtate. They adhered to this requiſition, not only in defiance of the diſpleaſure of the Crown, which was manifeſted by the baniſhment of the Parliament of Paris to Troyes in Champagne; but in oppoſition to their own eſſential intereſts, and eventual exiſtence. The nobility, attached by ſo many ties to the Sovereign, and the natural ſupporters of his prerogative; irritated at the attempt made by Calonne, and perſiſted in by the Archbiſhop of Toulouſe, to deprive them of their exemption from the projected land tax, or "impot territorial," joined the courts of judicature in their refuſal to regiſter the meaſures propoſed, and forſook their hereditary maxims of policy, to adopt the popular party. The irreſolute conduct of the Firſt Miniſter under theſe delicate and trying circumſtances, invigorated and emboldened

boldened the enemies of Government; and the ſpirit of remonſtrance, complaint, and menace, diſſeminated with induſtry, became daily more general and alarming.

The Archbiſhop, after many inefficient or unſucceſsful plans for the re-eſtabliſhment of the finances, and ſome ill-conceived exertions of ſeverity and power againſt his opponents, felt himſelf unequal to combat the gathering ſtorm of national indignation; and retiring from a ſituation of danger and eminence, abandoned his maſter to the mercy of events. He even quitted France, and paſſed the Alps into Italy; as Calonne, under ſimilar expreſſions of general reſentment, had done in the preceding year; when finding the Royal protection withdrawn, and already impeached by the Parliament of Paris, he retreated firſt into Holland, and from thence croſſed the ſea to England. In this perplexed ſituation, Louis the Sixteenth compelled to diſmiſs one Miniſter, and forſaken by another; ſurrounded with embarraſſments, and having only a choice of evils, conſcious that the very foundations of the throne and monarchy were crumbling under his feet; endowed with no talents or great qualities which might enable him to ſuſ-

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tain his own dignity, coerce his ſubjects, or reſtore order and energy in the public affairs: alarmed and terrified at the demonſtrations of diſcontent which appeared in the capital, and the provinces: under the preſſure of theſe various conſiderations and apprehenſions, he embraced the reſolution of meeting the wiſhes of the nation; and if driven to the laſt neceſſity, of laying the diſtreſſes of the Crown before the repreſentatives of the people.

Necker, who had conducted the finances during the proſecution of the late war with England, and who had attained a very unmerited degree of popularity ſince his diſmiſſion from office, was reinſtated in his employment of Comptroller General. The avowed enemy of Calonne, whom he accuſed of peculation and malverſation, he had appealed to the public by various controverſial writings, defamatory of that Miniſter, and tending to criminate him as a defaulter in the eyes of France and of all Europe. The famous "Compte rendu au Roi" in 1781, in which he laid open to his own Sovereign, and to all mankind, the expenditure, revenue, and reſſources of his country, may be regarded not only as an unprecedented diſcloſure of the hitherto

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ſacred and unveiled arcana of the French monarchy; but as having operated much beyond the immediate and oſtenſible pretext of his own juſtification, by awakening, and directing the reflexions of every claſs of men towards the profuſe diſtribution of the public treaſure. Simple in his exterior, and decent in his manners, Necker attained the fame of diſintereſtedneſs and probity. Equally republican in birth and in principles, he flattered, by theſe circumſtances, the prevailing ſpirit and genius of the times. Avowedly odious to the party of the Queen, and of the Count d'Artois, he could hardly be ſuppoſed to poſſeſs the real confidence or attachment of the King, who had only been driven by his own diſtreſs, and the current of popular favor, to have recourſe to his aſſiſtance and ſervices. Deficient in all the eſſential qualities of a great Miniſter, and ignorant of thoſe enlarged principles of taxation and revenue, which were alone competent to the extrication of ſo vaſt a monarchy as France, he ſupplied theſe defects by little arts and narrow projects, adapted to the exigencies of the day. In the Canton of Bern his talents might have entitled him to reſpect, and they would have been in their proper ſphere.

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An able arithmetician, but a feeble ſtateſman, he only appeared in the firſt ſtation of finance, to evince how inadequate were his abilities to that dangerous elevation; and after vainly attempting to ſuſtain an ill-founded reputation, he has now retired to oblivion, unlamented, and almoſt unnoticed by that nation, among whom he was ſo lately idolized.

Although the recall and nomination of Neckar appeared to give general ſatisfaction, and awakened the hopes of his numerous and ſanguine admirers, yet theſe ſymptoms of approbation gradually ſubſided. The temporary effect of his name in raiſing the public credit, produced no permanent or beneficial conſequence. Languor and debility characterized every operation of finance; and Government became leſs competent to reſiſt the encroachments of the people, in proportion as its embarraſſment multiplied. Paris, rendered clamorous by the high price of grain, and attributing this ſcarcity more to the arts of monopoly, and even to the indirect interference of the Court in permitting the exportation of corn, than to any deficiency in the productions of the earth, proceeded to acts of violence, bordering on inſurrection. The introduction of a

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body of military forces into the capital, quelled, not without a conſiderable effuſion of blood, theſe firſt ſymptoms of revolt, and reſtored a degree of tranquillity and ſubmiſſion. Notwithſtanding this apparent check to the ſpirit of popular innovation, every circumſtance tended to evince, that the numerous ſubjects of complaint on the ſide of the people could not be extinguiſhed, by any expedient ſhort of unconditional ſubmiſſion on the part of the Crown; or of an appeal to the ſword, if the former meaſure ſhould be thought too degrading for a Prince born in the purple, and accuſtomed to regard his power as unlimited and irreſiſtible. The naked and unprotected Majeſty of the throne, no longer environed, as under Louis the Fourteenth, by a ſplendid houſehold and the pomp of royalty, formed a very inefficient barrier againſt a nation, enthuſiaſtic in their demands of a conſtitution; and who ſeemed to be determined to ſeize the favourable moment, for curtailing the odious prerogative of iſſuing "Lettres de Catchet," and raiſing ſupplies by arbitrary mandates. The levities and profuſion of the Queen; the haughty tone which was aſſumed by the Count d'Artois on ſeveral occaſions; and the ſuppoſed

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ſubſervience of the King to his wife and brother, encreaſed the frenzy for reformation, and added to the general effervescence. Yielding with ungracious reluctance to theſe manifeſtations of the approaching ſtorm, the King conſented to adopt the humiliating and unwelcome advice offered by his Miniſter, of convoking the States General at Verſailles: but, at the ſame time, ſtimulated to reſiſtance by his own feelings, as well as by the exhortations of thoſe who were continually near his perſon, he began to prepare for extremities, and to aſſemble forces.

The Duke of Orleans, who, at an early period of the preſent troubles, had been ordered to retire to his ſeat at Reinſey, on account of the active part which he had taken in oppoſition to the Government, had obtained, from the lenity or indulgence of the Court, permiſſion to reviſit Paris. Leſs ſenſible to this mark of favour, than irritated by the act of ſeverity which preceded it, he determined on revenge, and embraced with ardor the popular cauſe. His high quality and near alliance to the Sovereign; his immenſe revenues: his central ſituation at the "Palais Royal," in the heart of the metropolis; his numerous connexions,

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and extenſive influence: this combination of circumſtances enabled him to become a very dangerous and formidable opponent to the Crown, in its preſent fallen and debilitated ſtate. He probably did not apprehend the extremities to which his own intrigues might conduct a tumultuous aſſembly; or he might conceive that he ſhould always be able to direct its operations, and to ſuperintend its movements. It is even poſſible, as his enemies aſſert, that the flattering proſpect of the Regency, which already opened itſelf to his ambition as neither a remote nor improbable event, conduced to determine his line of action, and to prevent him from ſeeing the precipices with which ſuch a purſuit was ſurrounded. He was elected a member of the States General for Crepy in Valois, and took his ſeat in the Aſſembly.

This extraordinary convocation of all the orders of the kingdom, which had not been ſummoned ſince the Regency of Mary of Medicis, and whoſe very exiſtence ſeemed to have been annihilated by three long reigns of arbitrary power, was opened with the utmoſt ſolemnity by Louis the Sixteenth, aſſiſted by the Princes of the Blood, and accompanied with

all the external ſplendor becoming ſo auguſt a ceremony. Many ſources of internal diſcord and confuſion, almoſt inevitable from the competition and oppoſite pretenſions or intereſt of the Nobility, Clergy, and Third Eſtate; the facility of introducing corruption among ſo vaſt and mixed a body of men; above all, the loyalty and adherence naturally to be expected from the two firſt claſſes of the ſtates: theſe inherent vices in their formation inſpired the Court with a confidence, that no unanimity or exertion of vigour would ever characterize ſo heterogeneous a maſs. The firſt proceedings of the Aſſembly juſtified theſe expectations. Much time elapſed in diſputes ariſing from the incompatibility of the reſpective demands of the different orders; and though theſe were at laſt happily terminated by the Nobility and Clergy renouncing, or acquieſcing in the claims of the delegates of the people; yet the Sovereign ſtill poſſeſſed great reſources, and various means of protracting or averting any act militating vitally againſt his prerogatives.

Had Louis the Sixteenth been left to the impulſe and direction of his own character, it is probable that he would have continued to yield to the encroachments of the democratical ſpi-

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rit, which had already produced ſo many involuntary conceſſions on the part of the Crown; and which, encreaſing in vigour as it proceeded, avowedly aimed at giving birth to a free conſtitution, and limited monarchy. He wanted all that energy, elevation, and courage requiſite to ſuſtain him in a ſtruggle againſt his people, and to enable him to repreſs their attempts at emancipation. But in the Queen and the Count d'Artois, reſentment at the inroads of a nation whom they had long regarded only as formed for ſervitude; and the habitual exerciſe of arbitrary power, warmly impelled to every exertion for its preſervation; while it dictated the moſt decided meaſures for repreſſing and chaſtizing a mutinous and diſcontented capital.

They united their efforts to ſuſtain the irreſolution of the King, and ſucceeded. It was determined in the cabinet of Verſailles, to adopt the moſt vigorous principles; to diſſolve the National Aſſembly; to diſmiſs the Comptroller-General; and to puniſh the inſolence of the metropolis. Prudence and addreſs were, however, requiſite to mature theſe counſels, and to facilitate their execution. A great body of forces, principally conſiſting of the Swiſs

and German regiments in the ſervice of France, was gradually collected from different provinces. The Marechal de Broglio, an officer of high military reputation, and of known attachment to the Crown, was named to the ſupreme command. Every neceſſary preparation for maintaining the Royal authority, if neceſſary, by the moſt ſpirited and ſevere acts of puniſhment, was made, without even the affectation of diſguiſe or concealment. The capital, incapable of reſiſtance, and unconſcious even of its own capacities of defence; deſtitute of leaders, of arms, and of troops, waited patiently the chaſtizement which impended.

Paris, involved in circumſtances more diſtreſsful even than thoſe in which it ſtood, when inveſted by Henry the Third in 1589, and under an equal neceſſity of ſubmitting to the conditions which an incenſed monarch might have dictated, was ſnatched from pillage by a revolution not leſs ſudden and unexpected, than that which, two centuries preceding, had deprived Henry the Third of his life. The frantic and ſanguinary zeal of a Monk effected this deliverance in one inſtance: in the other, the Pariſians were indebted to the timidity, delays, and want of deciſion in the Court. Dur-

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ing the firſt days of July, the metropolis, though turbulent and riotous, made no exertions to oppoſe the army by which it was encircled and ſurrounded. The partizans and ſupporters of the Royal power were numerous, and ready to evince their zeal and loyalty. The "Prevot des Marchands," who is the firſt municipal magiſtrate, was in the intereſts of the Crown. The Baſtile awed one part of the capital, as the "Hotel des Invalides" did the other. Paris, taken in the toils of arbitrary power, might have been diſarmed, and deprived of the means to excite future commotion. The imprudence, puſillanimity, and impatience of the Court rendered theſe advantages of no avail, and precipitated the unfortunate Prince upon meaſures which terminated in irremediable diſgrace and ruin.

Miſtaking or neglecting the moſt obvious principles of policy and wiſe precaution, which dictated to commence the plan of operations by ſubjecting Paris, from whence alone any danger was to be apprehended; the King was induced to diſmiſs Neckar with expreſſions of indignation, which were accompanied by menaces and inſult on the part of his brother, the Count d'Artois. This ſtep, which evinced a total

a total change of reſolutions, and which, from the popularity of the Miniſter, was likely to produce a violent fermentation in every order of men, was followed by others equally injudicious. The States General were driven into the "Salle des Etats" where they held their meetings, by detachments of the Guards; who ſurrounded them, and who waited only the orders of the Court, to proceed to greater extremities againſt the obnoxious repreſentatives of the nation.

Had theſe manifeſtations of vigour been only ſuſtained by inſtantly attacking and entering Paris, it is not to be doubted that, unprepared as it ſtill was, and unwilling to expoſe to the licence of an incenſed ſoldiery the lives and properties of its citizens, the capital would have been without difficulty reduced to obedience. But, an ill-timed and fatal delay, equally injurious with the preceding precipitation, gave the inhabitants time to recover from their firſt emotions of ſurprize and apprehenſion. They ſaw the timidity and imbecility of the Government, who having founded the charge, dared not advance to the attack. They profited by this want of exertion; and paſſing from one extreme rapidly to another, they al-

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moſt unanimouſly took up arms againſt their rulers and oppreſſors. Joined by the French Guards, who, from a long reſidence in the capital, had been peculiarly expoſed to ſeduction, and who at this deciſive moment abandoned their Sovereign, the Pariſians broke through every obſtacle by which they had hitherto been reſtrained. The ſupplies of arms and ammunition which had been provided for their ſubjugation, were turned againſt the Crown; and the "Hotel des Invalides," the great repoſitory of military ſtores, after a faint reſiſtance, ſurrendered.

The Prince de Lambeſc, who alone, of all the officers commanding the Royal troops in the vicinity of Paris, attempted to carry into execution the plan for diſarming the capital, was repulſed in a premature and injudicious attack, which he made at the head of his dragoons, near the entrance of the garden of the Tuilleries. Already the "Prevot des Marchands," Monſieur de Fleſſelles, convicted of entertaining a correſpondence with the Court, and detected in ſending private intelligence to Monſieur de Launay, Governor of the Baſtile, had been ſeized by the people, and fallen the firſt victim to the general indignation. His

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head, born on a lance, exhibited an alarming example of the danger to which adherence to the Sovereign muſt expoſe, in a time of anarchy and inſurrection.

The Baſtile alone remained; and while it continued in the power of the Crown, Paris could not be regarded as free, or even as ſecure from the ſevereſt chaſtiſement. It was inveſted by a mixed multitude, compoſed of citizens and ſoldiers who had joined the popular banner. De Launay, who commanded in the caſtle, by an act of perfidy unjuſtifiable under any circumſtances, and which rendered his fate leſs regretted, rather accelerated, than delayed the capture of this important fortreſs. He diſplayed a flag of truce, and demanded a parley; but abuſing the confidence which theſe ſignals inſpired, he diſcharged a heavy fire from the cannon and muſquetry of the place upon the beſiegers, and made a conſiderable carnage. Far from intimidating, he only augmented, by ſo treacherous a breach of faith, the rage of an incenſed populace. They renewed their exertions with a valour raiſed to frenzy, and were crowned with ſucceſs. The Baſtile, that awful engine of deſpotiſm, whoſe name alone diffuſed terror, and which for

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many ages had been ſacred to ſilence and deſpair, was entered by the victorious aſſailants. De Launay, ſeized and dragged to the "Place de Greve," was inſtantly diſpatched, and his head carried in triumph through the ſtreets of Paris.

Few captives, either of inferior or of eminent rank, were found in the apartments of the Baſtile. The Count de Lorges, at a very advanced period of life, diſcovered in one of the dungeons of the "Tour de la Bertaudiere," was liberated, and exhibited to the public curioſity in the "Palais Royal." His ſqualid appearance, his beard which deſcended to his waiſt, and above all, his imbecility, reſulting probably from the effect of an impriſonment of thirty-two years, were objects highly calculated to operate upon the ſenſes and paſſions of every beholder. It is indeed impoſſible, however we may lament or condemn the ferocious ſpirit which has characterized and diſgraced the French revolution, not to participate in the exultation, which a capital and a country ſo highly illuminated, and ſo long oppreſſed, muſt have experienced, at the extinction of this deteſtable and juſtly dreaded priſon of ſtate. Nor does

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the rapidity with which it was captured excite leſs admiration, when its powers of reſiſtance are conſidered, and the ſpeedy relief which might have been afforded to it by the numerous bodies of regular forces, with which Paris was ſurrounded on every ſide.

With the Baſtile, expired the royal authority and conſideration. The deſpotiſm of the French Princes, which long preſcription, ſubmiſſion, and military ſtrength ſeemed to render equally ſacred and unaſſailable: which neither the calamities of the cloſe of Louis the Fourteenth's reign, the profligacy and enormities of the ſucceeding Regency, nor the ſtate of degradation into which the monarchy ſunk under Louis the Fifteenth, had ever ſhaken; that power, which appeared to derive its ſupport almoſt as much from the loyalty and veneration, as from the dread and terrors of the ſubject, fell proſtrate in the duſt, and never betrayed any ſymptom of returning life.

Paris, liberated from all reſtraint, or even wholeſome police, appeared to riot in the intoxication of freedom; and ſtained its acquiſition by ſcenes of violence and blood, unworthy the firſt capital in Europe. Every trace

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of obedience diſappeared; and even the promoters of the late inſurrection were not ſecure from the capricious fury of a frantic and ſavage populace, who filled the "Place de Greve" with clamours, and frequently tore the victim whom their indignation had ſelected, from the hands of juſtice.

But, at Verſailles, conſternation and alarm filled the court on the arrival of this extraordinary intelligence. Yielding at once to the united impulſe of his terrors and his natural inclinations, the King, without even preſerving the forms of Majeſty however fallen, repaired to the National Aſſembly, rather as a ſuppliant than a monarch. Diſordered in his dreſs, and unaccompanied by his guards or uſual attendants, he betrayed his agitation in the ſpeech which he addreſſed to the States. Only two days preceding this melancholy exhibition of degraded dignity, he had replied to a remonſtrance which they preſented to him, in terms of determination mixed with menaces. He now adopted the language of diſtreſs, invoked their aſſiſtance, diſowned his intention to employ force for the ſubjection of the capital, aſſured them that he had already ſent orders to withdraw the troops which had inveſted Paris

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and Verſailles; and profeſſed his deſire to give the moſt unequivocal proofs of his deference to the wiſhes of his ſubjects. He concluded by imploring them to make known theſe his paternal diſpoſitions, to the inhabitants of the diſtracted metropolis.

The Aſſembly, which trembled a few hours before for its own ſafety, and had expected to be offered up as victims to the vengeance of an irritated Sovereign, replied with expreſſions of loyalty and affection to theſe gracious declarations, although evidently extorted by fear. It was however far otherwiſe at Paris, where the populace, deeming their triumph incomplete while the King remained apparently tranquil in his palace; not only exacted his perſonal and immediate preſence among them, to ſanction their outrages on his authority: but accompanied this demand with menaces, if refuſed, of ſetting fire to Verſailles, and at once extinguiſhing the obnoxious Princes of the Houſe of Bourbon in the flames. Perhaps a monarch endowed with qualities ſuch as Louis the Fourteenth poſſeſſed, would perhaps have refuſed compliance with this humiliating requiſition; and while his army was yet entire, and the royal dignity

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not totally degraded, have embraced the generous reſolution of meeting the ſtorm, of trying the fortune of war, and at leaſt devolving to his ſucceſſor the prerogatives, which at his acceſſion he had received and exerciſed. But Louis the Sixteenth poſſeſſed no abilities competent to ſo magnanimous and unequal a ſtruggle. He had already abandoned his attempts to maintain the Royal power in its original vigour; and he had now ſcarcely any option between the loſs of his throne, and a complete ſubmiſſion to the arbitrary pleaſure of a populace, thirſting for blood, inflamed by ſucceſs, and daily offering up victims to its revenge.

Under theſe melancholy circumſtances, He did not heſitate to yield obedience to the mandate, which it was no longer ſafe to refuſe. After ſuch a night as Charles the Firſt may be ſuppoſed to have paſſed, previous to his aſcending the ſcaffold; but unattended with that ſerenity and fortitude, which eminently diſtinguiſhed the Engliſh Monarch in the laſt act of life, he ſet out for Paris. Conſcious, however, of the peril attendant on his appearance in the metropolis of his dominions, and doubtful of eſcaping from the rage of the multitude to whom he was to be preſented, he prepared for

death

death, as at leaſt a poſſible event. He received the ſacrament, made ſome private diſpoſitions of affairs, and gave various orders in conſequence. Though deſirous to ſee and embrace his ſon and daughter before his departure, he yet had firmneſs ſufficient to refuſe himſelf this indulgence, as fearing that he might too deeply affect, and diſqualify him for the part which he was to perform. "J'en aurai "plus de plaiſir," ſaid he, "ſi je reviens." A gentleman who was near his perſon on this occaſion, encouraging him, and venturing to anſwer for his ſafety, the King replied, "Henri Quatre valoit mieux que moi; et cependant on l'a aſſaſſiné."

Though he quitted Verſailles at an early hour, it was late before he entered Paris, from the immenſe multitudes who aſſembled to ſee him paſs, and who teſtified no ſentiments of loyalty in their acclamations. When arrived at the "Place de Greve," and conducted to the "Hotel de Ville," the new Mayor, Monſieur Bailli, who had been elected to ſupply the late unfortunate firſt magiſtrate inſulted the fallen Prince by a mock ſurrender of the keys of his capital; which he accompanied with a ſarcaſtic and inſolent reflexion

flexion on the different ſituation in which Henry the Fourth ſtood, when he received a ſimilar teſtimony of its ſubmiſſion and allegiance. The cries of the people, who inſiſted that the King ſhould ſhew himſelf on the balcony, compelled him to give this laſt proof of his deference to their wiſhes; and to add to the condeſcenſion, he accepted from the hands of the Mayor, the National cockade, which he firſt carried to his lips, and then placed in his hat. After having been detained and exhibited as a captive to his own ſubjects during the greater part of the day, without ſuſtenance or refreſhment of any kind, he was at length permitted to return to Verſailles, and to conceal his emotions in the privacy of his own apartments.

While this humiliating ſcene was acting before the eyes of all France, which were turned towards ſo unuſual and attractive a ſight, the adherents to the late meaſures, terrified at the menaces thrown out againſt them, and dreading the moſt fatal conſequences of popular fury, profited of the King's abſence and viſit to his capital, to effect their own eſcape.

The Count d'Artois, regarding himſelf as peculiarly marked out for proſcription and impeachment,

peachment, and apprehenſive that even his proximity of blood to the Sovereign might prove an inſufficient protection to his life, fled among the firſt, carrying with him his ſons, the Dukes d'Angouleme and de Berri; two youths who were ſucceſſively preſumptive heirs to the Crown, in caſe of the demiſe of the Dauphin. In the hurry of a precipitate retreat, it was found extremely difficult to furniſh a few hundred louis d'ors to a Prince, for whoſe expenſive gratifications, only ſome days before, the treaſures of the monarchy were inſufficient. He took the road to Flanders; and was already far advanced towards the frontiers, before his departure was known or ſuſpected at Paris. When ſo diſtinguiſhed a perſonage, and one ſo nearly allied to the throne, deemed himſelf no longer ſafe even in the Royal reſidence, it cannot excite wonder that thoſe of a leſs elevated condition, and who were equally obnoxious to an enraged populace, ſhould conſult their ſafety by inſtant flight. The principal roads were covered with illuſtrious fugitives, under every poſſible diſguiſe and concealment. The Prince of Condé quitted Chantilly, followed by his ſon and grandſon, the Dukes of Bourbon and Enguien. The Prince of

Conti

Conti, the laſt in ſucceſſion of the Blood Royal, after undergoing many extremities of hunger and fatigue, arrived at Luxembourg; to which place likewiſe the Marechal de Broglio, abandoning his army, repaired without delay.

The Ducheſs of Polignac, ſo long unrivale'd in the affections of the Queen, and round whom all the pleaſures of the Court of Verſailles were uſed to aſſemble; tearing herſelf from this ſcene of diſſipation, attain'd with difficulty the city of Bale in Switzerland; after having encountered numerous dangers, and been preſerved from the laſt degree of violence as ſhe paſſed through Sens, by the happy preſence of mind which diſtinguiſhed an Abbé, by whom ſhe was accompanied. At Bale, by one of thoſe ſingular accidents which evince the power of fortune, ſhe found in the inn at which ſhe alighted, the late Miniſter, Necker; who having paſſed through Swabia after his diſmiſſion, on his way to Geneva, here firſt received from his enemies, the intelligence of the revolution. The Baron de Breteuil, purſued by the moſt marked deteſtation of his countrymen, evaded, as well as the Prince de Lambeſc, the ſnares prepared to intercept them: the former reaching Bern in ſafety, as the latter did Turin.

Monſieur de Beſenval, leſs fortunate, was ſeized at Brie Comte Robert; and even the ſolicitations of Neckar himſelf, who endeavoured to interpoſe in his behalf, were inſufficient to obtain his enlargement.

In this general conſternation, the Queen, abandoned by all her deareſt connexions, remained with her two children, friendleſs, and almoſt alone, in the palace of Verſailles. No Prince of the Royal Family ventured to abide the ſtorm, except the Count de Provence; who during the continuance of all theſe diſorders, had enjoyed a diſtinguiſhed ſhare, at leaſt of negative approbation; and whoſe conduct throughout the critical circumſtances which preceded the ſedition of Paris, had been ſuch as to conciliate, in ſome degree, the popular favour.

The Duke of Orleans, to whoſe intrigues, or oppoſition to the Crown, may be greatly aſcribed the rapid progreſs of the general diſcontent, and the exceſſes of the people; viewed from the "Palace Royal" with ſecret pleaſure, the effects of his machinations, and enjoyed his triumph over the vanquiſhed court. The military command of the National troops, and of the capital, were conferred by almoſt unanimous

mous delegation on the Marquis de la Fayette; as the ſupreme civil and municipal juriſdiction devolved on Bailli, Mayor of Paris. The union of both theſe powers, was however frequently found unequal to impoſing proper reſtraints upon the ungoverned paſſions and ſavage violence of a populace, new to freedom, and who ſtained its acquiſition by daily acts of vengeance and cruelty. The heads of Foulon and Berthier, one of whom had occupied a high ſituation in the late miniſtry, and the other had been intendant of Paris, were carried through the ſtreets; and the circumſtances with which the deaths of theſe eminent perſons were accompanied, are only to be compared in horror and atrocity with thoſe attendant on the maſſacre of St. Bartholomew, or the aſſaſſination of the Marechal d'Ancre under Louis the Thirteenth.

Meanwhile, at the inſtigation and requeſt of the National Aſſembly, Neckar was recalled, and invited by letters of the moſt flattering, and even penitential tenor, from the King himſelf, to reſume the ſuperintendance of the finances. He yielded, though with apparent reluctance, to theſe entreaties; and repaired to Court, loaded with expreſſions of general attachment and

veneration in every place through which he paſſed: while the credulous and deluded multitude expected from his preſence, a ſpeedy redreſs of all their grievances, the revival of public credit, and a remedy to the ſcarcity of grain, which had excited the clamours of the capital and the kingdom. To the admiration and aſtoniſhment of mankind, in an abſolute monarchy ſo ſtrongly cemented as that of France appeared to have been, and in which loyalty was antiently eſteemed to be characteriſtic of every claſs of citizens, no efforts were made to ſupport the Royal power. An enthuſiaſtic paſſion for liberty pervaded all the provinces; and the revolution, commenced on the banks of the Seine, ſpread with equal rapidity and unanimity, to the foot of the Alps and Pyrenees; to the Rhine and the Mediterranean.

No permanent calm ſucceeded to this ſtorm of popular indignation. Elated with the poſſeſſion of freedom, and exerciſing in many inſtances, a tyranny more oppreſſive and ſevere than that from which they had juſt eſcaped, the people meditated new and greater invaſions on the dignity, as well as the prerogatives of the Crown. The preſs, freed even from that wholeſome and neceſſary reſtriction,

which

which Governments the moſt relaxed impoſe upon the publication of opinions, compenſated for the fetters which it had ſo long worn, by giving birth to every ſpecies of licentious production and inſolent attack upon perſons of the higheſt rank. The Queen was peculiarly the object of theſe libellous invectives; and every accuſation private or political, which malignity could invent, to alienate the affections and irritate the paſſions of mankind againſt her, was circulated, and publicly expoſed to ſale. Although all the pomp and majeſty, which in better times had ſurrounded and concealed the Sovereign, was now entirely withdrawn: though only guarded by the burgeſſes of Verſailles, and deſtitute of any military protection againſt inſult and outrage, Louis the Sixteenth ſtood expoſed to every enterprize which a mutinous capital might undertake or execute; yet ſome veſtiges of perſonal liberty he ſtill retained. He was free to enjoy the diverſion of the chace; and the National Aſſembly, convoked at Verſailles, continued to hold its meetings there, under his immediate ſuperintendance and inſpection. It was even thought decent and neceſſary, on the part of the new tribunes of the people, to march ſome regi-

ment,

ments, in the month of September, on whoſe adherence they conceived that they could ſafely rely, to perform the ordinary functions of ſtate; at the ſame time that they prevented any eſcape, if ſuch was intended by the King.

But, where ſo many inflammable materials were collected, it was not poſſible that any conſiderable time could elapſe before they burſt into a conflagration. After one or two attempts, which the vigilance and activity of La Fayette prevented from being carried into full execution, the populace of Paris, excited by various arts, and incenſed at the Queen for having brought the Dauphin, and preſented him to the officers of the regular troops after a public entertainment, roſe as by univerſal conſent, and determined to march to Verſailles. By what motives, or with what intentions, the conductors of this armed mob were actuated, it is perhaps impoſſible at preſent poſitively to aſſert. The deepeſt and blackeſt deſigns have, by popular malignity, been attributed to the Duke of Orleans; no leſs than the attainment of the Regency, at whatever price, and by every mode, however treaſonable or flagitious. Many of the circumſtances which diſtinguiſhed that extraordinary ſcene, unqueſtionably evince a plan not

more

more hurtful than nefarious; and which ſeemed calculated, by operating on the fears of the Sovereign, to induce him to abandon the throne, and ſeek his ſafety in flight; while the Queen, who was more an object of national obloquy and averſion, might be inſtantly offered up as a victim to the frantic multitude.

It is difficult to do juſtice to the horrors of a night, ſimilar only to thoſe which are furniſhed by the annals of Charles the Ninth, and which reminds us of the times of Catherine of Medicis. Poſterity will ſcarcely credit, that at the concluſion of the eighteenth century, and in a country eminently diſtinguiſhed by all the ſofter virtues of humanity, acts of blood and ferocity more ſavage than the Janizaries of Conſtantinople uſually exerciſe againſt their deſpots, were performed with impunity. The ſingularity and incredibility of the recital will be augmented by recollecting, that many of the moſt violent among theſe ruffians, were women; or, at leaſt habited in a female dreſs. Armed with every deſtructive weapon, they aſſaulted the guards who were ſtationed at the door of the Queen's apartments, burſt into them, murdered thoſe who oppoſed their progreſs, and penetrated to the chamber in which ſhe

ſlept.

ſlept. The efforts which were made to retard their fury, and the cries of "Sauvez la Reine," which echoed through the palace, gave her an inſtant in which to eſcape. The firſt Queen in Europe was ſaved from a death the moſt ignominious, by the interval of almoſt a ſingle moment. Undreſſed, and nearly naked, ſhe gained a private ſtaircaſe, which conveyed her to the King, who received her in his arms, where ſhe fell ſenſeleſs with terror. The materials of the bed from which ſhe had juſt riſen, after undergoing the ſtricteſt ſearch, in hopes of diſcovering the unhappy object of their purſuit, were ſcattered over the room, as ſome gratification to their diſappointed vengeance.

Louis the Sixteenth himſelf, appearing on the balcony of his apartment, in the language and attitude of ſupplication, vainly implored the populace to ſpare his guards, whom he ſaw maſſacred at his feet, without the power of extending to him any relief. He as vainly beſought the Queen to yield to the neceſſity of the time, and to retire to Rambouillet, where her perſon would at leaſt be ſecure. Exerting a courage ſuperior to her ſex, and elevated above a ſenſe of the danger to which ſhe was ſo conſpicuouſly expoſed, ſhe firmly

perſiſted

perſiſted in her refuſal to fly; and declared her determination to accompany the King, and at leaſt to expire as ſhe had lived, a Queen of France. Yet, conſcious of the probability of her falling a ſacrifice to the popular rage, ſhe armed herſelf with a poniard, as a laſt reſource againſt the degradation of plebeian violence and brutality.

It is impoſſible, how much ſoever we may condemn certain parts of her conduct and character, not to admire the heroiſm and magnanimity of this deportment, in which we ſeem to recognize the blood of ſo many Emperors from whom ſhe deſcended. The weakneſs of the woman was, notwithſtanding, mingled with the fortitude of the Sovereign; and when ſhe entered the coach which was to convey herſelf and the captive King from Verſailles to Paris, terrified at the cries of a furious multitude who ſeemed to demand her forfeit life, ſhe threw herſelf into the arms of La Fayette, who offered her his hand at the door of the carriage; and whoſe protection ſhe invoked to preſerve her from outrage and death. Placing the Dauphin in her lap, and ſeated by her huſband, the cavalcade moved ſlowly towards the capital; while the

heads

heads of the murdered "Gardes du Corps," borne on poles, and held up to her view, preſented a melancholy proſpect of her own probable deſtiny. They at length reached the palace of the Thuilleries, thus accompanied, and took poſſeſſion of that part of it deſtined for their reception and reſidence: while cannon, mounted at the principal avenues, under pretence of ſafety and defence, ſecured them from reſcue, and rendered eſcape impracticable.

Perhaps no day ſo ignominious to the Royal dignity had been beheld, ſince the elevation of the Capetian Princes to the throne of France. The capture and impriſonment of Louis the Ninth at Damietta, of King John at Poictiers, and of Francis the Firſt at the battle of Pavia, however unfortunate and humiliating, yet were at leaſt ſoftened by many conſiderations. Thoſe Monarchs were all taken in arms, after exerting the moſt heroic acts of valour againſt their conquerors, and owed their misfortunes only to the chance of war. Even Henry the Third, when he fled from his capital, purſued by the Guiſes, yet retained his perſonal independence, and ſoon returned to beſiege and to chaſtiſe his rebellious ſubjects. Louis the Sixteenth,

Sixteenth, ſunk below eſteem or commiſeration, and not having exerted either ability or courage in the defence of his invaded prerogatives, only held a precarious life at the mercy of a ſeditious and inſolent populace, who having already impriſoned, might in any moment of reſentment, terminate the reign of their fallen and degraded King. The palace in which he was confined, having been in a great meaſure neglected for more than a century, during which time Paris had rarely ſeen any Sovereign reſident in the metropolis, was totally unfit for the reception of a Court; and even the apartments which were occupied by the King himſelf, were in ſo ruinous or decayed a condition, as not altogether to exclude the inclemency of the weather. To this ſituation was a Monarch reduced, who only a few months before, might be regarded as at the ſummit of human greatneſs; and the foundations of whoſe throne, ſtrengthened by long poſſeſſion and by habits of obedience, ſeemed to bid defiance to all the ordinary convulſions which overturn empires, and deſtroy the firmeſt fabrics of human power and wiſdom. While theſe ſcenes of outrage and violence were exhibiting in France, it is difficult to imagine

imagine a picture of more complete ſerenity than England preſented; and this internal repoſe was accompanied with every circumſtance of external proſperity, and augmenting national conſideration. The year which immediately ſucceeded the malady of George the Third, may be ranked among the happieſt of his reign, whether it be conſidered as perſonally affecting himſelf, or as productive of felicity to his people. The recent danger from which he had eſcaped, rendered his health and ſafety peculiarly precious to his ſubjects; as the animated expreſſions of their attachment and loyalty muſt have deeply touched the heart of a Prince, infinitely ſenſible to theſe genuine marks of affection. The character of the Sovereign was not more formed to produce, than that of his Adminiſtration was to perpetuate the general tranquillity. The conduct of Mr. Pitt during the whole progreſs of the late commotions in France, may be held up as a model of political honour and rectitude; perhaps, equally ſo of wiſdom. Unlike to Richlieu, who fomented the cauſes of diſcord between Charles the Firſt, and his Parliament: unlike to Vergennes, who ſtimulated the Americans to reſiſtance;

and

and after a ſeries of indirect and inſidious arts, violated the moſt ſolemn treaties in order to aſſure their final independence: the Engliſh Miniſter ſteadily and ſyſtematically adhered to the moſt exact neutrality. The native elevation of his mind, and the magnanimity which has ever characteriſed his meaſures, rendered him incapable of deſcending to the little artifices of crooked and vulgar ſtateſmen. The probity of his private life pervaded and marked his public line of action; nor did ſo uncommon and dignified a mode of proceeding, under circumſtances which might ſeem to juſtify and authorize a more relaxed conduct, fail to produce its full effect on the two nations who were peculiarly affected by it, as well as on the other ſtates of Europe. Some approbation, if not admiration, is indeed due to a Government, who have been able to unite vigour, energy, and protection, with the moſt religious adherence to the national faith, and to every principle of ſound and generous policy.

The period which is compriſed between the months of May 1789 and 1790, like the reign of Antoninus Pius, affords few materials for hiſtory, drawn from the interior events of the time

time. England, at peace with all the world, in the boſom of repoſe, ſaw her commerce and manufactures expand, her credit augment, and her name excite reſpect among the moſt diſtant nations; while many of the great ſurrounding European kingdoms were either involved in foreign war, or deſolated by domeſtic troubles. This tranquility was not however allied to an ignominious and enervate ſloth; but, on the contrary, was ſecured by vigilance, activity, and exertion. In conjunction with Pruſſia and Holland, Great Britain indirectly extended her attention and ſuccour to Guſtavus the Third, ſinking under an unequal conteſt with the vaſt empire of Ruſſia. She reſtrained and arreſted Denmark, even after that power, as an auxiliary of the Court of Peterſburgh, had already taken up arms, and committed hoſtilities againſt Sweden. She ſignified to Leopold, who had recently ſucceeded to the thrones of Hungary and Bohemia, her deſire that he would recall his troops from the Banks of the Danube; and ſhe ſuſtained by her negociations the firmneſs of the Ottoman counſels, while ſhe ſilently, but not leſs decidedly, impoſed limits on the ambition of their great enemy Catherine the Second, by prohibiting

biting her fleet from preſuming to quit the Baltic, and to complete the deſtruction of the Turks in the Archipelago.

In this exalted ſituation, to which perhaps no parallel in our annals can be adduced, ſince the termination of the ſhort, but ſplendid protectorate of Cromwell, a ſtorm unexpectedly and ſuddenly aroſe from a quarter, where it would ſeem, that no foreſight or precautions could have anticipated the danger. Among the new and unexplored paths of commerce, which the ſpirit of a diſcerning and adventurous people had attempted to open ſince the peace of 1713, were particularly two, which appeared to promiſe the moſt beneficial returns. The firſt was a whale fiſhery, ſimilar to that carried on for ages near the coaſts of Greenland; but transferred to the Southern hemiſphere, near the extremity of Patagonia, and in the ſtormy ſeas which ſurround Cape Horn; as well as the Pacific Ocean. In the courſe of a few years, this branch of trade had augmented rapidly, and was found on trial to afford very important advantages; nor had it received any impediment from the vague pretenſions of the Spaniſh Crown to the ſovereignty of the

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ſhores waſhed by that ocean, which was the ſcene of their exertions.

The ſecond of theſe enterprizes, original in its own nature, able in its conception, bold in its execution, and having no precedent for its guidance, was directed to countries and to objects almoſt as much unknown to geographical, as to commercial knowledge or experience. It demanded many qualities rarely and difficultly combined: a conſiderable capital; miniſterial approbation; faithful and capable conductors; dextrous navigators; and above all, much time and perſeverance to ripen, and ultimately recompenſe the perſons engaging in ſo eccentric and expenſive an expedition. This extraordinary union of talents and circumſtances was, however, found in men of no ſuperior deſcription among the mercantile inhabitants of London; and it will remain a ſtriking monument to future ages, of the energy, capacity, and nautical ability, which diſtinguiſh the preſent century and the Britiſh nation, above the moſt enlightened periods of any antient or modern people.

The North Weſt coaſt of America, the part of the earth to which this embarkation was

deſtined,

deſtined, was not only ſo remote, but ſo undefined, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, that its very exiſtence remained unknown or doubtful, before the diſcoveries of the reign of George the Third.

At the commencement of the preſent century, it was thought to be almoſt as much beyond the ordinary bounds of navigation, as the iſlands of the Heſperides appeared to the Greeks; and Swift himſelf, only eighty years ago, when he compoſed the entertaining voyages of Lemuel Gulliver, eſteeming it the proper region of fable and romance, ſelected it for the poſition of his imaginary Brobdignag. The immenſe tract of land, extending northward from California and New Albion to the Frozen Sea, had, indeed, in a more recent period, been partly explored, and faintly traced by Cook; though much remained for future enterprize and induſtry to accompliſh, before this diſcovery could be converted to any purpoſe of public utility. He had, however, aſcertained the exiſtence of the continent; and he had received from the barbarous natives, with whom he eſtabliſhed a ſpecies of barter, ſome valuable ſpecimens of furs, in

exchange for European commodities of a far inferior nature.

The hope of procuring a conſiderable number of theſe rare and coſtly ſkins, for the ſale of which a very advantageous market preſented itſelf at Canton in China, was the leading inducement to the adventurers, who engaged in the expedition. But, in the purſuit of private emolument, objects of general and national conſequence were neceſſarily implicated and interwoven. Behind this coaſt, to the eaſtward, lay the vaſt continent of America; opening a field to commercial activity and reſearch, in which the imagination itſelf was loſt. The diſcovery of a communication through this unexplored country, and which may ultimately connect it, to a certain degree, with our ſettlements in Hudſon's Bay, appears from their account, not to be totally viſionary, though it was regarded as ſuch by Cook himſelf.

Conceptions and enterprizes more calculated to enlarge the ſphere of induſtry; to connect the moſt remote parts of the planet of the earth by the bands of amity and commerce; to extend the limits of the human mind; and to immortalize, while they enriched the nation which originated them, have perhaps ſcarcely

ever

ever been imagined or executed. They were not inferior to the moſt ſublime and daring expeditions of antient Greece, and ſeemed to partake of the ſpirit of Columbus: though the preſent age, familiarized to naval ſkill and enterprize, no longer ſees with the ſame admiration, or confers the ſame eulogiums on modern candidates for fame; who are ſeldom regarded through any other medium than that of utility, or pecuniary advantage.

Animated by theſe views, and having received the moſt affirmative marks of the protection of Government previous to their departure, five ſhips were fitted out from London in 1785, and the two ſucceeding years. Four of theſe veſſels, after doubling Cape Horn, arrived ſafely on the North Weſt coaſt of America. The ſanguine expectations which had been entertained, of effecting a lucrative exchange of commodities with the natives, were fully and ſpeedily realized. Cargoes of the fineſt furs were procured, and ſold to the Chineſe, even under great commercial diſcouragements and pecuniary impoſitions, at ſo high a price, as amply to reimburſe and enrich the adventurers. Other attempts, of a ſimilar nature, were made from Bengal; and

two veſſels were ſucceſſively diſpatched from the Ganges to the ſame coaſt, in the year 1786. A factory was eſtabliſhed at Nootka Sound, a port ſituated in the fiftieth degree of northern latitude, on the ſhore of America. Poſſeſſion of it was ſolemnly taken in the name of the Sovereign and Crown of England: amicable treaties were concluded with the chiefs of the neighbouring diſtricts; and a tract of land was purchaſed from one of them, on which the new proprietors proceeded to form a ſettlement, and to conſtruct ſtorehouſes. Every thing bore the appearance of a riſing colony, and each year opened new ſources of commerce and advantage.

Although individuals, occupied in exertions of this private nature, could not be expected to extend their views or efforts to objects of public utility, yet ſome further information was collaterally and incidentally acquired, reſpecting the continent of America, in the courſe of their voyages. It is even pretended that a ſloop, named the "Waſhington," navigated for ſome hundred miles along a vaſt number of iſlands, ſcattered in a ſea, which interſects that continent in a north-eaſt direction; and though the accounts hitherto received or

tranſmitted,

tranſmitted, of this extraordinary and intereſting fact, are not either ſo minute, or ſo accurate, as by any means to entitle them to be implicitly received, yet they appear to be not totally deſtitute of foundation, or probability. Every proſpect, either of national advantage, or of private emolument, which the commerce of theſe coaſts ſeemed to promiſe to Great Britain, was, however, deſtined to experience a ſudden and unexpected ſuſpenſion.

On the 6th of May, 1789, two Spaniſh ſhips of war entered Nootka Sound; the commanding officer of which, after making every profeſſion of amity during ſeveral days, ſeized on the Engliſh veſſels, in the name of his Sovereign, as they ſucceſſively arrived from various ports of the coaſt, impriſoned the crews, confiſcated or plundered the cargoes, and ultimately carried them as lawful prizes to St. Blas, in Mexico. Violations ſo unprovoked, not only of the peace ſubſiſting between the two Monarchies, but of all the laws eſtabliſhed between civilized nations, were accompanied and aggravated by every circumſtance of duplicity, inſolence, and cruelty; while they were contraſted with the moſt friendly aſſiſtance and attentions, ſhewn to the captains of two American

rican ſhips, the "Waſhington" and the "Columbia," who had been brought by the ſame commercial inducements to the port of Nootka. Theſe teſtimonies of protection and regard were even carried ſo far by the Spaniards, as to compel the crew of one of the captured Engliſh veſſels to aſſiſt in navigating the "Columbia" to Canton; through which channel, the firſt regular and authentic account of theſe acts of hoſtility, was officially tranſmitted to the Engliſh Adminiſtration, though they had been preceded by ſome vague and indiſtinct intimations of the ſame nature, made by the Spaniſh embaſſador at the Court of London.

The conduct of the Firſt Miniſter, on receiving this intelligence, evinced no leſs the magnanimity than the deciſion of his character. Without deſcending to the tedious and humiliating forms of requeſt with the Court of Spain, which might elude and protract, if not ultimately refuſe, according to its uſual policy, any reparation for theſe outrages; he, in the firſt inſtance, by a meſſage from the King, informed the two Houſes of Parliament of the whole ſeries of tranſactions. He clearly evinced the nullity and injuſtice of any general pretenſions on the part of the Spaniſh

Crown,

Crown, to a territory, diſcovered, planted, and occupied by the Engliſh; but in particular, to the Port of Nootka, ſituated at a diſtance from any known ſettlement belonging to that nation. He profeſſed his anxious deſire to terminate by amicable explanation and treaty, the preſent cauſe of diſpute. He at the ſame time declared his determined intention, not only to exact from the Court of Madrid an adequate ſatisfaction and compenſation for the injuries recently ſuſtained; but to compel Spain to renounce decidedly and formally, any indefinite claim which ſhe might have ſet up, either to the excluſive navigation of the Pacific ocean, or to the ſovereignty of the whole North Weſt coaſt of America. He called on the loyalty, dignity, and honour of the Houſe of Commons for ſupport, in maintaining theſe invaded rights by force of arms, if Spain ſhould be inſenſible to the language of reaſon.

The approbation which ſo manly an appeal to the nation excited, was general and animated. The leaders of Oppoſition joined in that ſentiment, and expreſſed their conviction of the wiſdom as well as neceſſity of ſuſtaining, by every military and naval exertion, the effect of negotiation

tiation. The celerity with which theſe reſoluti-ons were followed, in the equipment of a pow-erful armament, was calculated to augment the high reputation of the Miniſtry throughout Europe, while it called into action all the reſources of the kingdom. A diſſolution of Parliament, unqueſtionably judicious under the circumſtance of a probably impending war, followed theſe demonſtrations of reſentment, and demands of reparation.

If we compare the energy and deciſion of ſo vigorous a line of conduct, with that which was adopted by Sir Robert Walpole or Lord North, in ſimilar ſituations, the contraſt muſt be highly flattering to the preſent Adminiſtra-tion. The ſluggiſh and reluctant diſinclination of the former, to perceive or to reſent the depredations committed by the Spaniards upon the Engliſh trade, during a long ſeries of years; while it emboldened the enemy, depreſſed the genius of England: until Parliament, rouſed by ſuch a continuation of inſults and indignities, at length vindicated the national honour, and drove the Miniſter from the ſuperintendance of affairs.

The temporiſing and puſillanimous counſels of Lord North, in the diſpute reſpecting the Falkland

Falkland iſlands; and the ultimate termination of it, which left the right undecided, and even aſſerted by the Court of Madrid, at the ſame moment that from motives of political convenience, Spain thought proper to cede the conteſted territory to England: theſe humiliating meaſures, expoſed and reprobated by the pen of Junius, ſtand in need of no comment, and are ſufficiently appreciated by a juſt and diſcerning people.

Spain was no longer governed by Charles the Third, at the time when theſe intereſting events took place. That Prince, after a reign of above twenty years as Sovereign of Naples, had aſcended the Spaniſh throne on the death of his brother Ferdinand the Sixth, in 1759; and expired at a very advanced period of life, in December, 1788. His unconcealed diſlike of the Engliſh nation, from whom in his youth he had received ſome ſignal benefits, as well as ſome painful and perſonal humiliations, had probably induced him, even more than the ties of blood, or connexions of policy with the Court of France, to join that kingdom in two ſucceſſive wars which ſhe carried on againſt Great Britain.

To

To the counſels of his reign, and probably to a ſyſtematic plan in concert with the Cabinet of Verſailles, for attacking the commerce, and ſetting limits to the enterprizes of England on the North Weſt coaſt of America, we may without injuſtice attribute the acts of violence, committed by Don Martinez in the Port of Nootka. The ſhort period, compriſing ſcarcely five months, which elapſed between the death of Charles the Third, and thoſe infractions of the peace previouſly ſubſiſting between the two Crowns, leave no room to doubt that the original orders were iſſued during the life of the late Sovereign.

Charles the Fourth ſucceeded to the Spaniſh monarchy under theſe circumſtances. Though of a mature age, his character was little known or underſtood beyond the limits of his own dominions. In the early part of his life he had appeared to evince ſentiments more Caſtilian, than any of the deſcendants of Philip the Fifth had hitherto diſcovered; and to promiſe a reign, in which the feelings of a common origin and deſcent would influence leſs on affairs of ſtate, than a wiſe conſideration of the true policy and intereſts, becoming a genuine King of Spain. It may however be queſtioned, whether this anticipation

ticipation of his maxims and ſuppoſed line of conduct, will be confirmed by experience; and whether he will emancipate himſelf from the partialities, naturally connected with his near affinity to Louis the Sixteenth. The ſame Miniſters ſeem to govern, and the ſame principles to animate the Court of Madrid, which have uniformly characterized it ſince the extinction of the Spaniſh branch of the Houſe of Auſtria: and the time is probably ſtill diſtant, when the pernicious effects of the treaty of Utrecht in uniting two monarchies, which for ages anterior to that event had never acted in conjunction againſt Great Britain, will have finally ceaſed to operate.

Meanwhile, the efforts of the Firſt Miniſter to terminate the preſent diſpute by negotiation, kept equal pace with the exertions made to equip a formidable naval force. At the ſame time that a fleet, the command of which was deſtined to Lord Howe, aſſembled at Portſmouth, Mr. Fitzherbert was diſpatched as ambaſſador to Madrid, in order to try the effect of remonſtrance and expoſtulation. The Engliſh people, unanimous in their approbation of the meaſures purſued, and in their demand of reparation for the injuries ſuſtained,

loudly

loudly called for inſtant war, or for the moſt unequivocal and ſatisfactory conceſſions. The convulſions and embarraſſed ſtate of the French monarchy, together with the perſonal ſituation of the King of France, appeared to render an adherence to, or completion of the family compact impracticable, however well inclined the Court of Verſailles might be ſuppoſed, to aſſiſt and ſupport her ally.

Spain doubtleſs felt and regretted this incapacity, which compelled her to commence a war againſt England, unaſſiſted by any European power; and the event of which, in the preſent circumſtances, might be fatal to her grandeur or commerce in every part of the world. She ſeemed to yield to theſe obvious conſiderations; and the Spaniſh Miniſtry towards the cloſe of July, agreed to make a compenſation for the loſſes, ſuſtained by the Engliſh adventurers plundered at Nootka, as a baſis or preliminary to a final and amicable arrangement. Notwithſtanding, however, this apparent deſire of adjuſting the points in diſpute, and of avoiding the ultimate appeal to the ſword, every exertion was not only made in the ports of Cadiz and Ferrol, to fit out a numerous ſquadron; but the Spaniſh ambaſſador at the

Court

Court of France, expended the treaſures of his maſter, in endeavours to induce the National Aſſembly to adopt the quarrels of Charles the Fourth, and to fulfil in its whole extent the obligations of the family compact. His labours, though not equally ſucceſsful, as, under more propitious circumſtances they might have proved, yet produced a vote favourable to the views and wiſhes of the Crown of Spain. A general profeſſion on the part of the National Aſſembly, of adherence to the ſtipulations formed between the two nations; and a reſolution inſtantly to arm a conſiderable naval force at Breſt, were procured and publiſhed. The hopes of a ſpeedy and permanent accommodation between the Courts of London and Madrid, which the firſt conceſſion on the part of the latter power had excited, gradually grew more uncertain and problematical. Autumn advanced, without any certainty or deciſion on this great point; and though the fleet of England, which had cruized in the Bay of Biſcay during near ſix weeks, returned again to Spithead, without having ſeen an enemy, yet the expectation of an eventual rupture was rather augmented than diminiſhed.

While

While theſe negociations and armaments detained the Weſt of Europe in ſuſpenſe, the moſt important and unexpected events had taken place among the Princes of the Germanic empire, in conſequence of the death of the late Emperor Joſeph the Second. That reſtleſs and turbulent Prince, exhauſted in body, and agitated in mind, expired at Vienna in the commencement of the preſent year. His vaſt, but divided and revolted provinces, devolved to his brother Leopold, Great Duke of Tuſcany. Few Sovereigns have ever acceded to a throne under more critical and alarming circumſtances. Though Laudohn had cloſed his brilliant career of military glory, and even ſhed a luſtre over the laſt hours of Joſeph, by the capture of Belgrade: though the Turks had been driven beyond the Danube, and the Imperial troops had at length penetrated into Servia and Moldavia; yet theſe advantages, bought with three campaigns, and preceded by defeats and diſaſters, offered a very inadequate compenſation for the calamities, which menaced or afflicted every other part of the dominions of the Houſe of Auſtria. Hungary, ſo renowned for its enthuſiaſtic loyalty and attachment to Maria Thereſa, when that Princeſs was involved in the deepeſt

deepeſt diſtreſs, had been alienated by her ſucceſſor; who inſulted their moſt ſacred prejudices, while he invaded their moſt valuable immunities. Poſterity will ſcarcely believe that this injudicious and infatuated Prince, ſoon after his acceſſion, from reſentment to the Hungarians, not only removed the crown and regalia of that monarchy from Buda, the antient capital, to Vienna: but, as a mark of ſcorn and contempt, cauſed theſe venerable inſignia of the kingly dignity, inexpreſſibly precious in the eſtimation of the people, to be conveyed from one capital to the other, in the common ſtage waggon.

The King of Pruſſia hung over Bohemia, with a prodigious army, ready to enter that kingdom. The German Princes were almoſt univerſally diſaffected to the late Emperor, and had reprobated his inſidious projects for an exchange of territory with the Elector Palatine. The Netherlands, irritated by a long ſeries of oppreſſion, confiſcation, and violation of all their antient liberties, had renounced any allegiance to a Prince, whom they regarded not as a protector, but a tyrant. Philip the Second, when he recalled the ſanguinary Duke of Alva, was ſcarcely more deteſted, and had not more

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completely loſt the low countries, than Joſeph the Second had done. Dalton, though at the head of a regular and formidable body of forces, had been compelled precipitately to evacuate Bruſſels, and to ſeek his ſafety in a diſorderly and ignominious retreat. Luxembourg alone remained, of all the ten provinces, when Leopold ſucceeded to his brother; and Flanders no longer even liſtened to the propoſitions of accommodation, which Joſeph in his dying moments offered to his revolted ſubjects.

In this ſituation, ſurrounded with difficulties occaſioned by the ambition and deſpotiſm of his predeceſſor, the new King of Hungary, after ſome months of delay and irreſolution, wiſely yielded to the neceſſity, impoſed on him by the diſtracted condition of his affairs. The Courts of Berlin and of London, acting in concert, and ſuſtained by a Pruſſian army, gave law to the Houſe of Auſtria. Leopold conſented to abandon the alliance of the Empreſs of Ruſſia; to reſtore to Turkey the territories lately acquired; and to receive his Flemiſh ſubjects into favour, after conceding and confirming, in the moſt extended degree, all their liberties and privileges. This vigorous and ſucceſsful interpoſition was inſtantly followed by a peremptory requiſition,

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on the part of the ſame powers to Catherine the Second, by which that haughty and enterprizing Princeſs was required to follow the example exhibited by the King of Hungary; and to grant an equitable peace to the Ottoman Porte, as well as to conclude the war which ſhe carried on againſt Sweden.

From ſo humiliating a neceſſity, the Empreſs extricated herſelf by one of the moſt rapid, unforeſeen, and perhaps maſterly ſtrokes of policy, which is to be found in the annals of the preſent century. She made a peace with that King of Sweden, againſt whom ſhe had not ſcrupled, a few years ſince, to excite his own ſoldiers and ſubjects to revolt: who had ſcarcely eſcaped from captivity at Wybourg, by forcing a paſſage through the Ruſſian fleet, with which he was ſurrounded: and who had not only committed hoſtilities and waged war upon her empire; but was ſuppoſed to have drawn his pen againſt her reputation, and to have accuſed her to Europe, and to future times, as an uſurper, inſatiable in her thirſt of power, and deſtitute of faith or honour. Only a few days intervened between the moſt rancorous diſplay of perſonal enmity, and the ſolemn exchange of the ratifications of peace: while Catherine, li-

berated by this ſucceſsful exertion from an enemy who detained her fleet in the Baltic, and who might preſent himſelf at the very gates of her capital, aſſumed new vigour, diſdained to ſubmit to the mandates of Pruſſia, and continued her military operations againſt the Turks.

She did not ſtop here; but, irritated by the attempt to fetter her arms and limit her conqueſts, ſhe preſſed Guſtavus the Third to enter into a confederacy againſt thoſe powers, with whom he had been ſo lately in ſtrict alliance; and to whoſe timely interference or good offices, he had been in a great meaſure indebted for his preſervation. She negociated anew with the Prince Regent and Cabinet of Denmark, whom the interpoſition of England had hitherto reluctantly retained in neutrality. She corrupted, or perſuaded the Poliſh Diet to expreſs ſentiments hoſtile to Pruſſia; and encouraged Spain to refuſe compliance with the demands of the Britiſh Government.

Under theſe circumſtances and appearances, hoſtile or inauſpicious to the repoſe of Europe, the month of October commenced. During its progreſs, the hopes and fears of the nation were painfully ſuſpended, by the uncertainty of

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the final event. The impatience and anxiety, natural to, and inſeparable from ſuch a ſituation, were infinitely augmented by the ſecrecy and ſilence, which ſurrounded and concealed the operations of the cabinet. The powers and energies of Government, concentered round the Firſt Miniſter, and veſted in his perſon, exhibited to the Engliſh nation, all the vigor, celerity, and deciſion of a deſpotiſm, unaccompanied with its characteriſtic and concomittant evils. Though the fineſt and moſt numerous fleet which Great Britain had ever equipped, lay at Spithead, ready to ſtand out into the Atlantic upon the ſhorteſt notice: though Admiral Corniſh, at the head of eight ſhips of the line, had already ſet ſail; and, favoured by an eaſterly wind, was clear of the Channel: though a detachment of the Guards, to the number of above two thouſand men, were under orders to march to Portſmouth; and every preparation was made to facilitate their prompt embarkation: though the blow which impended over the Spaniſh monarchy, hung by a ſingle thread, and might every inſtant fall; yet, not a whiſper tranſpired, to gratify the curioſity of an eager capital, and an expecting country.

Univerſal ignorance, or fanciful conjecture prevailed, reſpecting the deſtination of theſe powerful naval and military armaments: while the magnitude and ſcattered poſition of the Spaniſh dominions, from the mouth of the Miſſiſſippi to that of the river Plate, left an ample field for the imagination, and afforded ſcope for unbounded aſſertion. To thoſe who recollected the delays, the publicity, and the timidity which degraded the counſels, and fruſtrated the meaſures or exertions of England, during the Adminiſtration which conducted the American war, the preſent contract was matter of equal wonder and admiration. The nation, conſcious that its honour and its intereſts were committed to a depoſitary of tranſcendent integrity and firmneſs, patiently waited the winding up of the cataſtrophe, with eyes fixed on its conductor. Opinion fluctuated rapidly and capriciouſly from war to peace, as the moſt trifling events appeared to indicate the one or the other; and October expired as it had begun, in uncertainty and ſuſpence.

During the three firſt days of the ſucceeding month, as every hour might be ſuppoſed to decide on this momentous queſtion, expectation ſeemed to have attained its higheſt point; while

while the rapid approach of that period, when Parliament was ſummoned to meet for the diſpatch of public buſineſs, and the advanced ſeaſon of the year, ſuperadded to the length of time which had already elapſed ſince the commencement of the negotiation, appeared to preclude the poſſibility of any further delay. It was not till the fourth of November, a day already rendered memorable and auſpicious in the annals of Great Britain, that the meſſenger ſo long expected, arrived with pacific intelligence. Spain, after a reſiſtance proportioned to the magnitude and importance of the objects conteſted, and after peremptory and reiterated refuſals to concede upon points, equally affecting her pride and her intereſts, relaxed at once from this tone, complied with the demands of England, and ſigned a "Convention," which terminated every paſt or preſent cauſe of diſpute between the two Crowns.

To the wiſdom and moderation of the Spaniſh Firſt miniſter, the Count de Florida Blanca, this timely and temperate reſolution, which arreſted the ſword already unſheathed, was attributed, by an opinion, not only general, but unqueſtionably ſuſtained on high authority

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and evidence. If the hiſtorian was permitted to ſpeculate upon the events of futurity; or if from aſcertained and exiſting facts or circumſtances, we might be allowed to predict reſpecting thoſe which would have taken place; it is more than merely probable, that Spain muſt have ſuſtained very deep and laſting injury from that war, which was thus unexpectedly and ſuddenly averted.

The naval power of England, which at no period of paſt time, had ever been ſo expeditiouſly or vigorouſly called into action: the ſpirit and unanimity which prevailed throughout the kingdom: the acknowledged energy and capacity of the Adminiſtration: the very nature of the war in which we were ready to engage, which muſt have been not only offenſive, but directed to parts of the Globe peculiarly calculated to inflame the ardor of the aſſailants, by proſpects of wealth and plunder: the defenceleſs and unprotected ſtate of many of the Spaniſh colonies in both hemiſpheres: the anarchy, and conſequent incapacity of France, to extend any prompt and effectual ſupport to the Crown of Spain: even the leſs important, but diſtreſsful and perplexing embarraſſments, reſulting from the earthquake which demoliſhed

demoliſhed the fortreſs of Oran upon the coaſt of Africa, almoſt preciſely at the ſame time when the Emperor of Morocco commenced hoſtilities againſt the Catholic King: this combination of cauſes or events, in which there appears to be no exaggeration, may perhaps, without the imputation of national partiality, juſtify an opinion, that the Spaniſh monarchy was ſnatched by the wiſe and yielding policy of its Miniſter, from evils and calamities of no common deſcription.

While, however, I anticipate theſe advantages, which might probably have reſulted from war, under the circumſtances already enumerated; it is unqueſtionable, that to a country ſo deeply involved in debt, no ſeries of conqueſts which the wildeſt imagination can ſuppoſe, had they even been realized, could have compenſated for the misfortunes inſeparably connected with hoſtilities. Peace, even though only obtained on the moſt moderate, and barely equitable terms, muſt to every reflecting mind, have been far preferable to the acquiſition of all the provinces, which Cortez ever conquered, or Pizarro ſubdued. But the "Convention" recently ſigned, while on one hand it made ample reparation and reſtitution

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to the injured Crown, and plundered ſubjects of Great Britain; on the other, opened new and unexplored ſources of wealth and commerce. After having been ſubmitted to the inſpection and inveſtigation of the people of England during many weeks: after having received the moſt authentic atteſtations of public gratitude and ſatisfaction, in addreſſes to the Throne, from the great corporate bodies of London, Edinburgh, and Briſtol; neceſſarily compoſed of perſons highly ſenſible to, and highly enlightened upon, the commercial intereſts of the country: after having been finally diſcuſſed with all the ſeverity of political criticiſm, in the two Houſes of Parliament, and obtained the ſanction of decided approbation in both; having undergone theſe rigorous diſquiſitions upon its merits, the "Convention" may be examined like any other fact in the Engliſh annals, with the candour, impartiality, and temper of hiſtory.

That Great Britain has obtained by it points and objects, hitherto reſerved or refuſed by the Court of Madrid, in every treaty ſince the termination of the reign of Philip the Fourth, is inconteſtible. Time alone can completely

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aſcertain the value and intrinſic worth of theſe conceſſions, which are, in a great degree, dependant on the induſtry and enterprize exerted, in converting them to national advantage. That jealous and tenacious power, which originally diſcovered and conquered the New World, over which ſhe has always endeavoured to draw the deepeſt veil, while ſhe excluded every European ſtate from any participation in her vaſt acquiſitions; has, for the firſt time, receded from her high and excluſive pretenſions. The pretended donation of the See of Rome, and all the antiquated claims which long preſcription had rendered venerable, have been for ever relinquiſhed and abandoned by the preſent Convention. The navigation of the Pacific Ocean is, in effect, declared to be as free as that of the Atlantic. The right, claimed by England, of purſuing the fiſhery on thoſe parts of the coaſt of South America, unoccupied and uncolonized by Spain, is not only avowed: but a vaſt tract of the Magellanic regions, on either ſide of the Cape Horn, comprizing the whole coaſt below the moſt ſouthern ſettlement already made by the Spaniards, is declared to be free to both countries, for every purpoſe of temporary accommodation; while the two Crowns

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are equally interdicted and reſtrained, from forming future permanent eſtabliſhments on that inhoſpitable ſhore. In return for this liberal and ample conceſſion, England ſubmits to the equitable demand, of not permitting her veſſels to approach within ten leagues of the coaſts and countries, actually occupied by Spain upon the Pacific Ocean.

On the North Weſt Coaſt of America, the original diſcovery, occupancy, and ſovereignty of which, appear to furniſh matter of infinite doubt and diſcuſſion, ſtill greater advantages are ſecured by the Convention. Without recapitulating the primary ground of diſpute, upon which clear and immediate ſatisfaction is ſtipulated: the whole continent, north of the ſettlements already poſſeſſed by Spain, is left open to both nations; with only a reciprocal right of entry for purpoſes of trade, into the ports or places which either may occupy.

The ſame general and equal principle is laid down as the baſis of accommodation, in the ſouthern and northern hemiſphere, and forms the predominant feature of the treaty. It was not denied by the Miniſter, and it was juſtly aſſerted by his opponents, when the Convention was agitated in the Houſe of Commons,

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that to render it perfect, and exempt from future poſſible miſinterpretation, a preciſe limit ſhould have been drawn, both on the coaſt of North and South America. But the evils inſeparable from a prolongation of the diſpute, muſt have ſo greatly outweighed the benefit to be derived from any line of demarcation which could have been inſtantly ſettled, that no poſſible cenſure can be affixed on that account; ſince its expediency was not more obvious, than its immediate execution was difficult and impracticable. Nor can it be reaſonably doubted, that where ſo clear a principle is by mutual conſent eſtabliſhed, no eſſential obſtacle can ariſe, in the courſe of future negotiations between the two Courts, for the final ſettlement of their reſpective boundaries.

To complete this great act of public benefit and national glory, it only remained to meet the expence occaſioned by it, with promptitude and alacrity. The Miniſter, ſo far from avoiding or protracting that neceſſary, but painful and arduous taſk, followed the Convention, with the immediate production of the accounts reſpecting the naval and military armaments, and the pecuniary impoſitions which he meant to propoſe for their ſpeedy liquidation.

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Not more diſtinguiſhed by the magnitude and energy of his preparations to humble the monarchy of Spain, when war appeared inevitable; than characteriſed by the moſt ſalutary and ſevere œconomy, when that neceſſity no longer exiſted; his enlarged and active mind overcame the difficulties, by which common ſtateſmen are impeded. He propoſed to raiſe, not merely the intereſt of the debt recently incurred; but to extinguiſh the principal itſelf, in the ſpace of four years, though amounting to above three millions ſterling. The effect of ſo judicious and provident a meaſure, which muſt equally evince the magnanimity of the Miniſter from whom it originated, and the reſources of the country which adopted it, will be felt through every kingdom of Europe. It is not exceeded by any of the acts of wiſdom, found in the annals of Elizabeth, when the counſels of England were directed by the foreſight and policy of a Burleigh. It is without precedent ſince the beginning of the preſent century, and is calculated to excite the admiration and incredulity of future times.

The day, upon which Mr. Pitt ſubmitted to Parliament a ſyſtem, ſo calculated for general advantage, was diſtinguiſhed by another act

act, which might have rendered illuſtrious a perſon, leſs conſpicuouſly eminent above his fellow citizens. The garter, which was conferred by the Sovereign upon Lord Chatham, evinced the indifference or ſuperiority of the Miniſter to the higheſt external decoration and diſtinction; as powerfully, as his renunciation of a lucrative office in favour of Colonel Barré, at a much earlier period of his adminiſtration, had proved his diſintereſtedneſs and contempt of emolument.

As it ſeems hardly poſſible to have made greater ſacrifices, ſo perhaps, it is difficult to ſelect any example in modern times, of ſo early an acquiſition of that glory, which is the juſt reward of rectitude and talents. Whether the names of Clarendon, of Godolphin, or of Pelham, can be placed in any degree of compariſon or competition with that of Pitt, it may be left to poſterity to determine. But it is competent to the hiſtorian of the preſent age, to aſſert and to prove, that at no period ſince the reſtoration of monarchy in the perſon of Charles the Second, has this country permanently attained to ſo high a point of ſolid greatneſs and importance, as ſhe enjoys at the preſent moment. We ſhould ſearch in vain for

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any traces of national conſideration or honor, in the profligate annals of that diſſolute and dependent Prince, whom I have juſt named; or in the bigotted and tranſitory reign of his leſs criminal, but more unfortunate ſucceſſor. Shall we diſcover greater ſubject for pride and exultation, even under the temperate and elective government of William the Third?

Whatever obligations we may owe to the Prince of Orange, as our deliverer from civil and ſpiritual tyranny, his arms were conſtantly reſtrained by the Generals, as his meaſures were uniformly defeated by the policy and power, of Louis the Fourteenth.

After a perpetual and unequal ſtruggle, in which her commerce was almoſt annihilated, and in which the ſolitary laurels of the Boyne and of La Hogue, were contraſted with the annual defeats received on the Continent, and in the Channel, Great Britain nearly ſunk under the exertion. Though the peace of Ryſwick produced a ſhort and deluſive calm, yet the Crown of Spain, in violation of the moſt ſolemn renunciations, was quietly transferred, in the year 1700, on the extinction of the Spaniſh branch of the Houſe of Auſtria, to a Prince of France: while the laſt hours of William were occupied

occupied by ineffectual efforts, to prevent the fatal conſequences of an act, inconteſtably injurious to, or ſubverſive of the ſecurity, intereſts, and greatneſs of England.

It muſt be admitted, that the female reign which ſucceeded, ſo long as it was conducted by the counſels of Godolphin, and the genius of Marlborough, preſents a ſtriking picture of military glory, and ſucceſſive triumphs. The Court of Verſailles, accuſtomed to confer, condeſcended to ſolicit for peace; and Torcy, at Gertruydenburg, in 1709, exhibited the humiliating ſight of a Miniſter of Louis the Fourteenth, proſtrate before England and Holland. But the imprudence or preſumption of an Adminiſtration, intoxicated with proſperity, and unmindful of the changes of human affairs, allowed the moment to elapſe, in which the ſafety and intereſts of their country might have been for ever ſecured, on the moſt durable foundations. The horizon ſoon became darkened, and the proſpect obſcured by clouds.

Villars reſcued France from her ſtate of danger and diſtreſs, while Oxford and Bolingbroke diſgraced the government, and accelerated the death of their feeble miſtreſs, by meaſures of puſillanimity, and breaches of national

tional faith. The trophies of Blenheim and of Malplaquet were obliterated by the defeat of Denain, and the peace of Utrecht: the Houſe of Auſtria was betrayed in that diſhonourable treaty; and the evening of a reign, ſo diſtinguiſhed and ſo ſplendid, cloſed in weakneſs, and is only recollected with regret.

If the annals of the laſt Princeſs of the Stuart line afford ſo little matter for hiſtoric praiſe, it is not in the labyrinth of Continental Politics and alliances, which characteriſed and compoſed thoſe of George the Firſt, that we can look for topics of eulogium, or ſubjects for admiration. The naval victory, obtained by Byng in 1718, over the Spaniſh fleet in the Faro of Meſſina, however brilliant and deciſive; ſo far from being productive of any advantage to the nation, counteracted every principle of wiſe and judicious policy. It ſtands contraſted with the fatal bankruptcy of the South Sea year; with the melancholy ſacrifice of Hoſier's devoted ſquadron, under the walls of Porto Bello; with a dereliction of the intereſts and honour of the Crown of England, rendered ſubſervient to injurious predilections, and foreign acquiſitions.

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The commencement of the reign of George the Second, conducted, as the greater part of that of his father had been, by the counſels of Walpole, diſcloſes ſcarcely a more exhilarating proſpect. It was, indeed, pacific: but this peace was the ignominious and ſupine inſecurity of James; not the dignified and martial tranquillity of Elizabeth. I am at a loſs to find, in the preſent century, any portion of time leſs diſtinguiſhed by wiſdom and vigor; or during which, Great Britain was fallen into more complete inſignificance, than in that interval which elapſed from the death of George the Firſt in 1727, to the cloſe of Sir Robert Walpole's adminiſtration, in 1742. Though the ſubſervient fleet of this country eſcorted the younger ſon of Philip the Fifth, from Barcelona into Italy: though we facilitated and advanced the grandeur of the Houſe of Bourbon: though we tamely ſubmitted to the acts of violence, exerciſed by Spain againſt our commerce in all the American ſeas: though we abandoned the Emperor Charles the Sixth, to the united force of France, Spain, and Sardinia, who diſmembered Naples and Sicily from the Dominions of the Houſe of Auſtria, in ſo unequal a conteſt: though in order that

the meaſure of incapacity and miſconduct ſhould be complete, we even permitted Louis the Fifteenth, by incorporating the Dutchy of Lorrain with his hereditary poſſeſſions, to cement and perfect the French greatneſs; yet theſe mighty and numerous conceſſions did not conciliate affection, or procure reſpect. Verſed in the arts of Parliamentary addreſs, and the ſcience of domeſtic venality, but conſcious of his incapacity to conduct the veſſel through the ſtorm which impended; Walpole, when he had exhauſted every endeavour, to detain his Sovereign and his country in diſgraceful neutrality, reluctantly reſigned the reins of power, which he had held too long for the honor of his maſter, or the glory and advantage of England.

Pelham, after a ſhort interval, ſucceeded. His Adminiſtration, though neither fortunate and ſucceſsful in war, nor ſecure and undiſturbed in peace, yet was rendered reſpectable, by the luſtre of his private and perſonal virtues. The inglorious campaigns of Fontenoy, and of La Feldt: the defeats of the allied army in Flanders, followed by the capture of Bergen-op-Zoom, and the ſiege of Maeſtricht: the peace of Aix la Chapelle, humiliating and

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injurious to Great Britain: the ravages, or hoſtilities, continued to be exerciſed by France againſt our colonies in America and the Eaſt Indies, even ſubſequent to that treaty: theſe ſubjects of general complaint and diſſatisfaction, which clouded the Miniſtry of Pelham, conſoled the nation for his loſs, when removed by death in 1754, from the ſuperintendance of public affairs.

The ſhort remainder of the reign of George the Second, was equally calamitous and diſgraceful, 'till that memorable and brilliant, but tranſitory æra, preceding its final termination, when the genius of Pitt renewed the glories and ſucceſſes ſo long forgotten. The loſs of Minorca, and the ignominious convention of Cloſter-ſeven, were eraſed by the ſucceſſive conqueſts of Martinico, Canada, Plaſſey, Belliſle, and the Havanna. But, the demiſe of the Sovereign, in 1760, and the transfer of miniſterial authority which ſucceeded, prevented the beneficial conſequences, naturally to have been expected from this chain of victories. A peace, which never can be ſufficiently reprobated, and in which the ignorance of the intereſts of the nation, was only exceeded by the dereliction of the honor of the Crown, reſtored to the two

branches of the Houſe of Bourbon, thoſe provinces and poſſeſſions, of which they had been deprived by the Earl of Chatham.

I ſhall not enumerate the fleeting phantoms of Adminiſtration, which annually appeared and vaniſhed; nor attempt to deſcribe that period which elapſed, from the reſignation of Lord Bute, to the year 1770, when the reins of power were delegated to Lord North. There are certainly few events, included within that portion of time, which can induce us to lament that it was not of longer duration. With ſtill greater reaſon, I wiſh to draw a veil acroſs the ſeries of errors, incapacity, and miſconduct, which preceded and produced that fatal war, terminated by the emancipation of America; and which ſtill blazed in every quarter of the globe, at the æra when theſe memoirs commence.

From the elevation on which we are placed, it affords a ſort of melancholy pleaſure, to look down upon the anarchy and calamity, which endear the preſent Government, by a compariſon with that ſtate from which we have eſcaped. The actual ſituation of this country realizes the warmeſt wiſh of a Miniſter, or a Sovereign, to whom the proſperity and glory of England

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are ſupremely dear. That object which William vainly ſought to attain; which Godolphin and Marlborough allowed to eſcape; and which the Earl of Chatham was not permitted to accompliſh; has been reſerved for the preſent age to behold. The monarchies of France and Spain have been ſucceſſively humbled and reſtrained, without the neceſſity of having recourſe to the ſword. Great Britain, at the concluſion of 1790, is become by general conſent, the acknowledged Arbitreſs of Europe; and to her poſſeſſion of external conſideration and reſpect, unites every internal ſource of wealth and felicity.

From the ſurvey of ſo auguſt and animating a ſcene, it is natural to turn our eyes towards the picture exhibited by France, at the preſent moment. The convulſions which have agitated that diſtracted country ſince the month of October 1789, though ſometimes apparently ſuſpended or extinguiſhed, yet may poſſibly revive with augmented violence. The laſt fourteen months ſeem to have been alternately diſtinguiſhed, by acts of feſtivity and of ſlaughter; by the pageant of a Fœderation, in the "Champ de Mars" at Paris, where the national freedom was ſolemnly recognized by a captive and degraded

graded Sovereign; and by the memorable carnage of Nancy, which ſo quickly followed. It is perhaps impoſſible for the wiſeſt ſtateſman to predict the eventual conſequence of theſe conflicting cauſes; or to hazard a decided opinion on the final reſult, as yet concealed in futurity, and obſcured by ſo many contradictory appearances. The depreſſion and humiliation of the clergy; the ſale of the eccleſiaſtical property; the annihilation of the orders of nobility, which were almoſt coeval with the times of Clovis and of Pharamond; the abolition of the peerage; the renewal of the dangerous experiments of Law, and the creation of a paper currency, nearly as deſtitute of ſolid ſupport, as was the ſyſtem of that celebrated miniſter: Theſe extraordinary operations, or meaſures of government, in a great degree without precedent in the hiſtory of modern European nations, have not yet ſufficiently unfolded and developed their full effect, to enable the philoſopher and the hiſtorian to confer on them his cenſure, or his admiration.

It has not even hitherto been aſcertained or exemplified, ſince the extinction of the Roman freedom by Marius and Sylla, that a people whoſe numbers exceed twenty millions, are

capable

capable of being permanently governed under a free conſtitution. Nor has mankind yet ſeen any inſtance of a capital, and a country, habituated for ages to deſpotiſm, ſunk in pleaſures, loſt to public principle, deſtitute even of the forms of external reſpect for the national religion, and only intoxicated with the ſpeculations of a diſtempered and viſionary philoſophy, which ever aſpired or attained to a well-regulated and wiſely-cemented Liberty.

It was not in ſuch a ſtate of morals or of ſociety, that the Athenians broke the fetters of arbitrary power, when rouſed by Harmodius and Ariſtogiton. The elder Brutus bore no ſimilarity either to Mirabeau, or to La Fayette. Rome vainly aſſaſſinated her Dictator, when public virtue was no longer to be found in the ſenate, or among the people. The Mountaineers of Switzerland, who threw off the yoke of the Houſe of Auſtria; and the oppreſſed peaſants of the Low Countries, who revolted from the tyranny of Philip the Second, were poor, hardy, and martial. The Engliſh Parliament, which oppoſed, and ultimately vanquiſhed Charles the Firſt, called upon a nation, which however inflamed by fanaticiſm, was unſubdued by luxury, and uncorrupted by venality.

nality. Times of effeminacy and refinement have not hitherto been found to produce a plant, of ſo hardy and vigorous a nature, as Freedom; and if we are deſtined to ſee in the hiſtory of France, an example of this extraordinary contradiction to the reſult of all experience, it will be a ſtriking leſſon of the inſufficiency and fallibility, of human wiſdom or obſervation.

The time which has elapſed ſince the Revolution of July, 1789, has not been ſufficient, to aſcertain all its conſequences, or to ripen and mature the many cauſes, which may ſtill ſhake the freedom of France, before it attains to ſolidity. The yielding and paſſive conduct of the King, which has ſo powerfully operated to produce ſubmiſſion in the two orders of the nobility and clergy, may be overborne by events, or may be affected by the advice and counſels of thoſe who approach his perſon. The natural levity, and characteriſtic inconſtancy of the nation, may conduce to make them weary of a poſſeſſion, which however ineſtimable in its nature, is neither to be attained, nor preſerved, without unremitting vigilance and exertion. The ceſſation or ruin of many branches of trade, neceſſarily reſulting from the late convulſions;

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the ſeverity of the taxes, which a free Government is compelled to exact, in common with the moſt deſpotic Monarch: the long habits of unconditional ſubmiſſion, ſo forcible in their operation upon the mind and character: All theſe principles may ferment, and ultimately burſt into action.

To the internal ſources of change and commotion, external ones may unite. Of the ſeven fugitive Princes of the Blood, who precipitately abandoned their country at the commencement of the national troubles, only one, the Prince of Conti, has yet ventured to reviſit Paris, or ſubmitted to take the Civic Oath, impoſed by the new conſtitution. The malcontents, aſſembled at Turin round the perſon of the Count d'Artois, aided by the capacity and reſources of Calonne, and ready to be led on by Maillebois, menace the duration of the National Aſſembly. Even though theſe ſtorms were diſſipated, yet the Courts of Vienna and Madrid cannot be ſuppoſed to look with pleaſure, or approbation, on the fallen condition of Louis the Sixteenth; and would, probably, aid with more than wiſhes, any effectual ſtruggles which might be made for the reſtoration of his antient prerogatives. Theſe reflections and

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conſiderations may inſpire ſome reaſonable doubt, reſpecting the final iſſue of the ſubverſion of the Royal Power, and the permanency of a free conſtitution in France.

Whatever may be the reſult, and though liberty ſhould even ultimately triumph, its attainment has been accompanied with, at leaſt, a temporary diminution, approaching to total ſuſpenſion, of the political ſtrength, importance, and conſideration of the kingdom, as a European ſtate. The energy and activity of the Crown have been withdrawn; and a ſpirit of licentiouſneſs, the moſt fatal to every national and public effort, has prevailed throughout all the naval and military departments. The French colonies in the Weſt Indies are engaged in civil war, or become a prey to inſurrection and anarchy. The frontiers, towards Germany, Savoy, and Spain, are either expoſed to inſult and invaſion; or protected by troops, upon whoſe ſteady attachment and fidelity, after the late defection from their Prince, no ſecure reliance can be placed. That powerful monarchy, which for near a century and a half has inſpired terror, and whoſe reſtleſs ambition has been ſo dangerous to every ſurrounding country: which has twice, during that time, nearly ſub-

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jected Holland; which placed Philip the Fifth on the Spaniſh throne in 1700, and raiſed an Elector of Bavaria to the Imperial dignity, at a ſtill more recent period: that power, occupied in endleſs metaphyſical diſquiſitions upon the rights of men, or employed in deſperate projects of revenue and finance, appears not only to be incapable of invading the repoſe of her neighbours, but even of providing for her own internal ſafety and tranquillity.

Such is the ſtriking contraſt, which the two monarchies of France and England actually preſent. The one, ſtruggling through difficulties, to complete a ſyſtem of liberty; and attempting to renovate her diſordered finances, plunged into almoſt irremediable confuſion. The other, enjoying all the advantages of eſtabliſhed order; conducted by a Government equally vigorous and popular; meeting every pecuniary embarraſſment or impoſition, with new and unexampled reſources; ſtrengthening her credit, and extending her commerce, while ſhe covers the ocean with her navy, and ſpreads the glory of her name over every quarter of the earth.

I am arrived at that period, where the preſent work muſt neceſſarily terminate. I am

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conſcious that it is only an outline; but the events of which I have treated, are not ſufficiently removed, to admit of minute enquiry, or profound inveſtigation. Yet, this imperfect production may perhaps ſerve to light the ſteps of ſome future Hume or Gibbon, to whom genius ſhall delegate the ſublime taſk, of recording and perpetuating the Engliſh annals. My object has been only to commemorate the facts and characters, which have made the deepeſt impreſſion on my memory and underſtanding, while a ſpectator of their full effect; and to ſtamp them with the genuine ſentiment which they excited, of approbation or cenſure. "Sta-"tui res geſtas Populi Romani," ſays Salluſt, "carptim, ut quæque memoria digna videban-"tur, perſcribere; eo magis, quod mihi a Spe, "Metu, partibus Reipublicæ, animus liber "erat."

Whether I may be eſteemed altogether exempt from the emotions, diſclaimed by the Roman writer, I muſt leave to thoſe who ſhall peruſe this work, to determine. It is difficult to diveſt ourſelves of the predilections, which almoſt neceſſarily ariſe in our minds, when engaged in the recital or deſcription of ſcenes, acted in ages and countries the moſt remote.

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It would rather imply a degree of apathy, and defect of feeling, than any ſuperiority to common and vulgar prejudice, if I could ſurvey with the ſame tranquillity, the calamities, which only a few years ſince, threatened the deſtruction of England, and the preſent elevated ſtate of ſecurity which we enjoy: or if in relating them, I ſhould allow no portion of enthuſiaſm to mix with the veneration, always due to hiſtoric truth. Gratitude is naturally excited in every generous breaſt, by private benefits: but the Sovereign, or the Miniſter, who are the benefactors of nations, kindle, even in the hiſtorian who tranſmits to future times the events of their government, a venial partiality; nor can the reign of Trajan and Aurelius be written with the ſame indifference, as we feel in deſcribing the gluttony of Vitellius, or the crimes of Caracallà.

FINIS.